

# IMMANUEL

## Or, A discovery of TRUE RELIGION.

As it imports a living Principle in the  
minds of men ; grounded upon  
Christs Discourse with the Samaritanes.

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*Joh. 4. 14.*

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Being the latter clause of *The Voice Crying  
in a Wilderness* ; Or a Continuation of the  
*Angelical Life* :

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Partly Composed at the same time,  
By S. S.

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This is the Covenant that I will make with the House  
of *Israel* after those dayes, saith the Lord ; I will  
put my Law in their inward part , and write it in  
their hearts, *Jer. 31. 33.*

He that believeth in me, as the Scripture hath said,  
out of his belly shall flow Rivers of living Water,  
*John 7. 38.*

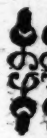
*Veritatem Philosophi quarunt, Theologi inveniunt, Religiosi Possident.*

*Com: Mirandol.*

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White Hart in Westminster Hall. 1669.





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A  
Healing Preface  
TO THE  
READER.

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 Amongst the many stupendious spectacles that are wont to surprise and amuze inquisitive and considerative minds, there seems to be nothing in the world of a sadder and more astonishing observation, than the small progress and propagation of *Christian Religion*. This I call a *sad* observation, because *Religion* is a matter of the most weighty and necessary importance, without which it is not possible for an immortal soul to be perfected and made happy: I call it *astonishing*, because *Christian Religion* hath in itself such

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advantages of recommending itself to the minds of men, and contains in it such mighty engines to work them into an hearty compliance with it, and to captivate their reason into itself, as no other Religion in the World can with any face pretend to. I do earnestly (and I suppose rationally and Scripturally) hope that this *veritas magna* those sacred Oracles will yet much more prevail, and that the founder of this most excellent Religion, who was *lift up* upon the cross, and is now *exalted* to his Throne, will yet draw more men unto himself: and this perhaps is all the *millennium* that we can warrantably look for. But in the mean time, it is too evident that the Kingdom of Sathan doth more obtain in the World, than the Gospel of Christ, either in the *Letter*, or *power* of it. As to the *former*, if we will receive the probable conjecture of learned enquirers, we shall not find above one sixth part of the known World, yet Christianized, or giving so much as an external adoration to the Crucified Jesus. As to the *latter*, I will not be so bold as to make any Arithmetical conjectures, but judge it more necessary and more becoming a charitable and Christian spirit, to set down in secret and weep over that sad but true account given in the Gospel, *Few are chosen*, and again *Few there be that find it*; being grieved (after the example of my compassionate Redeemer) *for the hardness of their hearts*, and praying with Joab in another case, *The Lord make his people an hundred times so*

Mat.

20. 16

Mat.

7. 14

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To many more as they be! It is besides my present purpose to enquire into the immediate causes of the non-propagation of the Gospel in the former sense; only it is easie and obvious to guess, that few will enter in by the way of the tree of life, when the same is guarded with a flaming sword; And it were reasonable to hope, that if the minds of Christians were more purged from a selfish interest, fierce animosity, and arbitrary selfishness, and possess'd with a more free, generous, benign, compassionate, condescending, candid, charitable, and Christ-like spirit, which would be indulgent toward such as are for the present under a less perfect dispensation (as our Saviours was) would not impose any thing harsh or unnecessary upon the sacred and inviolable Consciences of men; but would allow and maintain that liberty to men, which is just and natural to them in matters of Religion, and no way forfeited by them; then I say it might be reasonable to hope, that the innate power and virtue of the Gospel would prove most victorious, *Judaism*, *Mahometism*, and *Paganism* would melt away under its powerful influences, and *Sathan* himself fall down as lightning before it, as naturally as the eye-lids of the morning do chase away the blackness of the night, when once they are lift up upon the earth. But my design is chiefly to examine the true and proper cause of the non-progress of the Gospel as to the power of it, and its inefficaciousness upon the hearts and Consciences of those that do profess it. And now in finding

Lu. 9.  
49.  
50, 54  
55.

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out the cause hereof, I shall content my self to be *wise on this side of Heaven*. And as I dare not soar so high, so neither will I adventure to stoop so low, as to rake into particulars; which are differently assigned, according to the different honours and interests of them that do assign them; each party in the world being so exceedingly favourable to itself, as to be ready to say with *David*, *The earth and all the inhabitants of it are dissolved, I bear up the pillars of it*; ready to think that the very interest of Religion in the world is involved in them and their persuasions and *dogmas*, and that the whole Church is undone, if but an hair fall from their heads, if they be in the least injured or abridged. Which is a piece of very great fondness, and indeed the more unpardonable, in as much as it destroys the design of the Gospel, in confining and limiting the holy one of *Israel*, and making God *astopical*, as he was when he dwelt no where upon earth but at the Temple in *Jerusalem*.

Waving these extreams therefore, I conceive the true cause in general of the so little prevailing of true Religion in the hearts and Lives of men, is *the false notion that men have of it*, placing it there where indeed it is not, nor doth consist. That this must needs be a cause of the not prevailing of the Gospel whereever it is found, I suppose every body will grant; and that it is almost everywhere to be found, will I doubt no evidently appear by that description of true Christian Religion, which the most sacred Author of it the Lord Jesus Christ made to the

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the poor Samaritaness; which I have endeavoured briefly to explain, according to the tenour of the Gospel, in this small Treatise; which I first framed for private use, in a season when it was most behoveful for me to understand the utmost secrets of my own soul, and do the utmost service I was able towards the salvation of those that were under my roof; expecting every day to render up my own or their souls into the arms of our most merciful Redeemer, and to be fully swallowed up into that *eternal life*, into which true Religion daily springs up, and will at length infallibly conduct the Christian soul unto. This work thus undertaken and in a great measure then carried on, I have since perfected, and do here present to the perusal of my dear Countrey, having made it publick for no private end; but if it might be to serve the interest of Gods glory in the world: which I do verily reckon that I shall do, if by his blessing I may be instrumental to *undeceive* any soul *mistaken* in so high and concerning a matter as *Religion* is, or any way to *Awaken* and quicken any *Religious* soul not sufficiently *ravish'd* with the unspeakable glory, nor cheerfully enough *springing up* into the full fruition of *Eternal life*.

What a certain and undefeatable tendency true *Religion* hath towards the eternal happiness and salvation of mens souls, will I hope evidently appear out of the body of this small Treatise: But that's not all (though indeed that were enough to commend it to any rational soul, that is any whit free and ingenu-



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ous; and is not so perfectly debauched as to Apostatize utterly from right reason; ) For it is also the sincerest policy imaginable, and the most unerring expedient in the world for the uniting and establishing of a divided and rottering Kingdom or Common-wealth: To demonstrate which, was the very design of this Preface. It is well known ( Oh that it were but as well and effectually believed! ) that

1 Tim. *godliness is profitable to all things*, and that it

4. 8. hath the promises and blessings of the *life that now is*, and of *that which is to come*; that the right seeking of the Kingdom of God and

Mat. his Righteousness hath no less than *all things*

6. 33. annexed to it. How unmeasurable is the body and bulk of that blessedness, to which all the comforts of this life are to be as an *Appendix* to a *Volume*! But men are apt to shuffle off *generals*; therefore I will descend to instances, and shew in a few Particulars what a mighty influence Religion in the power of it would certainly have, for the political happiness and flourishing state of a Nation. Wherein I doubt not but to make it appear, that not *Religion* ( as some slanderously report ) but indeed *the want of it* is the immediate troubler of every Nation, and individual society, yea, and soul too; according to that golden saying of the holy Apostle, *From whence come wars and fightings? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members*: Here let me desire one thing of the Reader, and that is, to bear in his mind all along where he finds the word [ *Religion,* ] that I have principally a respect to the description given of it

in

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in the Text, and that I mean thereby a *divine principle implanted in the soul springing up into everlasting life.*

And now I should briefly touch those faults both in governours towards their subjects, subjects towards their governours, and towards each other, which do destroy the peaceful state and the sound and happy constitution of a body politick: And indeed I fear it will run me upon some inconvenience, if not confusion, to wave this method. But out of a pure desire to avoid whatever may be interpretable to ill will, curiosity, presumption, or any other bad disposition, and that it may appear to any ingenuous eye that I am more desirous to bind up, than to rake into sores, I will expressly shew how Religion would heal the distempers of any Nation, without taking any more than an *implicite* notice of the distempers themselves.

First, Then, it is undoubtedly true, that Religion deeply radicated in the nature of Princes and Governours would most effectually qualifie them for the most happy way of reigning. Every body knows well enough what an excellent *Encrease* and lovely constitution the Jewish polity was in, under the influences of holy *David*, wise *Solomon*, devout *Hezekiah*, zealous *Josiah*, and others of the same spirit; so that I need not spend my self in that enquiry, and so consequently not upon that argument. Now there are many ways, by which it is easie to conceive that Religion would rectifie and well temper the Spirits of Princes.

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This principle will verily constitute the most noble, heroical, and royal soul, in as much as it will not suffer men to find any unhallowed satisfaction in a divine authority, but will be springing up into a *Godlike nature*, as their greatest and most perfective glory. It will certainly correct and limit the over-eager affectation of unwieldy greatness and unbounded Dominion, by teaching them that the most honourable victory in the world is *self-conquest*, and that the propagation of the image and Kingdom of God in their own souls is infinitely preferable to the advancement or enlargement of any *temporal jurisdiction*.

The same holy principle ( being the most genuine off-spring of divine Love and Bignity ) will also polish their rough and over-severe natures, instruct them in the most sweet and obliging methods of government ;  
1 Cor. 7. 22. by assimilating them to the nature of God,  
2 Cor. 3. 17. who is infinitely abhorrent from all appearance of oppression, and hath most admirably provided that his *servants* should not be *slaves*, by making his service perfect freedom.

The pure and impartial nature of God cannot endure superstitious flatterers, or hypocritical professors ; and the Princes of the Earth that are regenerate into his Image, will also estimate men according to God ; I mean according to his *example*, who loves nothing but the communications of himself, and according to their participation of his *Image*,  
Lev. 2. 11. which is only amiable and advanceable in the world.

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world. What God rejected in his fire-offerings, Religion will teach Princes to disgust in the devotions ( as they call them ) of their Courtiers ; I mean not only the *leaven* of superstitious pride and dogged morosity, but also the *honey* of mercenary prostrations and fawning adulations.

In a word, this Religious principle which makes God its *patern* and *end*, springs from *him* and is alwayes springing up *into him*, would sovereignty heal the distempers of ruling by humour, self-interest, and arbitrariness, and teach men to seek the good of the publick before self-gratifications. For so God rules the world, who ( however some men slander him ) I dare say hath made nothing the *duty* of his creature, but what is really the *good* of it : neither doth he give his people Laws on purpose that he might shew his *Sovereignty* in making them, or his *justice* in punishing the breach of them ; much less doth he give them any such statutes, as which himself would as willingly they broke as kept, so he might but exact the penalty.

What I have briefly said concerning *political* governours, the judicious Reader may view over again and apply to the *Ecclesiastical*. For I do verily reckon that if the hearts of these men were in that right Religious temper and *holy order* which I have been speaking of, it would plentifully contribute towards the happy and blessed state of any Kingdom. I will speak freely ( let it light where it will ) that principle that springs up into popular applause, secular greatness, worldly pomp and bravery,

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bravery, flesh-pleasing, or any kind of self-exaltation ( which is manifold ; ) is really contradistinct from that Divine principle, that Religious nature that springs up into *everlasting life*. And certainly notwithstanding all the recriminations and self-justifications which are on all hands used to shuffle off the guilt, these Governours must lay aside their tullen pride, as well as the people their proud fullness, before the Church of God be healed in its breaches, purged of Antichristianism, or can probably arrive at any sound constitution or perfect stature.

But I suppose Religion will not have its full and desirable effects upon a Nation by healing the sickly heads of it ; except it be like the holy oyle powred upon the sacrificer's head, which ran down also upon the skirts of his garment. Therefore,

*Secondly*, It is indispensably requisite for the through healing and right constituting of any political body, that the *subjects* therein be thus Divinely principled. This will not fail to dispose them rightly *towards their Governours* and *towards one another*.

*1. Towards their Governours.* There are many evil and perverse dispositions in *subjects* towards their *Rulers* ; all which Religion is the most excellent expedient to rectifie.

*Psal.*  
*133.2.*

The first and fundamental distemper here seems to be a want of due Reverence toward these *vicegerents of God upon earth* ; which easily grows up into something positive, and becomes a *secret wishing of evil* to them. This fault, as light as some esteem it, was severely

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severely punished in Queen Michal, who de-<sup>2 Sam.</sup>  
 spised her Lord King David in her heart, and 6. 16.  
 her barren womb went down to its Sister the Prov.  
 grave under great reproach. And if an or-<sup>30. 16</sup>  
 dinary hatred be so foully interpreted by the  
 holy Apostle, *whosoever hateth his brother is* <sup>1. Job.</sup>  
*a murderer*; surely disloyal and malignant <sup>3. 15.</sup>  
 dispositions towards Governours must needs  
 have a fouler face; and we may say by a  
 parity of reason, *whosoever hateth his Prince*  
*is a Rebel and a Regicide.* Now this distem-  
 per, as fundamental and epidemical as it is,  
 the spirit of true Religion will heal, and I  
 think I may say that only: For I know no-  
 thing in the world that hath, nay I know  
 that nothing in the world hath that Sove-  
 raignty and dominion over the dispositions  
 and affections of the soul, as this principle  
 thoroughly ingrafted in the soul doth challenge to  
 itself. This alone can frame the heart of man  
 into that beautiful temper and complexion of  
 love and loyalty, that he will not curse the King,  
 no not in his conscience; no not though he were  
 well assured that there were no winged messen-  
 ger to tell the matter. *Eccles.*  
10. 20.

An other distemper in Subjects respective  
 to their Governours is *Impatience of bearing*  
*a yoke.* Which is an evil so natural to the  
 proud and imperious spirit of man, that  
 I believe it were safe to affirm, that every  
 irreligious subject could be well content to  
 be a Prince; however there may be many  
 who utterly despairing of such event, may  
 with the Fox in the Fable, profess they care  
 not for it. From this principle of pride  
 and



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and impatience of subjection I suspect it is, that the rigid *Chiliasm*s do so scornfully de-claim against, and so loudly decry the *car-nal Ordinances* of Magistracy and Ministry: not that they do verily seek the advancement of Christs Kingdom, ( which indeed every disorderly, tumultuous, proud, impatient soul doth *ipso facto* deny and destroy ) but of themselves. To whom one might justly ap-  
*Exod.* ply the censure which *Pharaoh* injuriously  
*5. 17.* passes upon the children of *Israel*, with a little alteration, *Ye are proud, therefore ye say let us go and do Sacrifice to the Lord.* This dis-temper the power of Religion would excel-lently heal, by mortifying ambitious inclina-tions and quieting the impatient turbulencies of the fretful and envious soul, by fashion-ing the heart to a right humble frame and chearful submission to every ordination of God. You will see in this Treatise, that a right Religious soul, powerfully springing up into everlasting life, hath no list nor leisure to attend to such poor attainments and for-ry acquests, as the Lording it over other men; being feelingly acquainted with a life far more excellent than the most Princely, and being overpowred with a supream and Sovereign good, which charms all its inor-dinate ragings, and laying hold upon all its faculties, draws them forth by a pleasing vi-olence unto a most zealous pursuit of itself. A principle of humility makes men good subjects; and they that are indeed probati-oners for another world, may very well be-  
have themselves with a noble disdain towards  
all

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all the glories and preferments of this.

The last distemper that I shall name in Subjects toward their Governours is *Discontents about conceited misgovernment and mal-administration*; which commonly spring from an *evil and sinister interpretation of the Rulers actions*, and are attended with an *evil and tumultuous zeal for relaxation*. Now this distemper, as great as it is, and destructive to the well-being of a body politick, true Religion would heal both root and branch. Were that noble part and branch of Christian Religion *universal Charity* rightly seated in the soul, it would not suffer the Son of the bond-woman to inherit with it; it would cast out those ireful jealousies, lowre suspicions, harsh surmises, and imbittered thoughts which lodge in unhallowed minds, and display itself in a most amicable sweetness and gentleness of disposition, in fair glosses upon doubtful actions, friendly censures or none at all, kind extenuations of greater faults and covering of lesser: For this is the proper genius of this divine principle to be *subtile* or very unbelieving of evil, and *subtle*, or easily entertaining of good reports, gladly interpreting all things to a good meaning that will possibly admit of such construction; or if you will in the Apostles phrase, *Charity is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil*. 1 Cor. 13. 7.

And as *Charity* doth cut up this root of discontents, so will *faith* allay and destroy those *discontents* themselves, which are about misgovernment and ill administration. This noble principle administers ease and satisfaction.

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satisfaction of the soul; if she happen to be provoked: For it will not suffer her long to stand gazing upon second causes; but carries her up in a seasonable contemplation to the supreme cause, without whom no disorder could ever befall the world; and there commands her to repose her self, to wit in the bosome of infinite wisdom and grace, waiting for a comfortable issue. He may well be vext indeed, that has so much reason as to observe the many monstrous disorders which are in the world, and not so much faith as to eye the inscrutable providence of a benign and all-wise God, who permitteth the same with respect to the most beautiful end, and blessed order imaginable. Though faith abhors the blasphemy of laying blame upon God, yet it so fixes the soul upon him, and causes her so to eye his hand and end in all mal-administrations of men that she hath no leisure to fall out with men, or quarrel with instruments.

*Psal.*

35.

20.

*Gal.*

5. 22.

23.

*Col.* 3.

12.

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16.

These Discontents I said were frequently attended with an evil and seditious zeal for relaxation, discovering it self in secret treacherous conspiracies, and many times in boisterous and daring attempts. These are at the first sight so directly contrary to the character given of Religious men, viz. the quiet of the Land, and the genius of Religion which is wholly made up of love, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance, mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, forbearance, forgiveness, charity, thankfulness, wisdom, that it is easie to conceive that Religion in the power of it would certainly heal this evil disease also.

There

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There are many pretenders to Religion; whose complaint is still concerning oppression and persecution; their cry is all for liberty and deliverance; but to make it the more passable and plausible, they style it the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ. This pretence is so fair, but withall so deceitfull, that I count it worth my time to speak a little more liberally to it. And here I do from the very bottom of my soul protest, that I account the advancement of the glory of God and the Kingdom of Christ to be the most desirable thing in the World; and that it is highly becoming the greatest spirits upon earth to employ the very utmost zeal and diligence to assist the accomplishment thereof: yea, so utterly do I abhor irreligion and Atheism, that (as the Apostle speaks in somewhat a like case) I do verily *Phil.* rejoyce that Christ is *professed*, though it be *1. 18.* but *pretended*, and that *truth* is owned though it be not owned *in truth*. I will further add, that the oppressing and obstructing of the external progress and propagation of the Gospel is hated of Christ, and to be lamented of all true Christians. Yea, I will further allow men a due sensibleness of their personal oppressions and injuries, and a natural warrantable desire to be redeemed from them. And now having thus purged my self, I entreat the Christian Reader patiently, and without prejudice to suffer me to speak somewhat closely to this matter: Yea, I do verily assure my self that I shall be accepted, or at least indulged by all free

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free and ingenuous spirits, who are rightly acquainted with the genius of Christian Religion, and do prefer *truth* before *interest*.

And first, For the *complaint*, that is mostly concerning *oppression* and *persecution*: certainly Religion, if it did rightly prevail in our hearts, would very much heal this distemper, if not by a perfect *silencing* of these complaints, yet surely by *putting them into another tune*. I reckon that Religion quite silences these complaints when it engages the soul so entirely in serving the end of God in afflictions, and in a right improvement of them for religious purposes, that she list not to spend her self in fruitless murmurings and unchristian indignations. As fire seizeth upon every thing that is combustible, and makes it fuel for itself, and a predominant humour in the body converts into its own substance whatever is convertible, and makes it nourishment to itself; so doubtless this spirit of *burning*, this divine principle, if it were rightly predominant in the soul, would nourish itself by all things that lye in its way, though they seem never so heterogeneous, and hard to be digested; and rather than want meat, it would with *Sampson* fetch it out of the very eater himself. But if Religion should not utterly silence these complainings by rendring the soul thus forgetful of the body, and regardless of its smart, in comparison of the happy advantage that may be made of it; yet methinks it should draw the main stream of these tears into an other channel, and put these complaints

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complaints into an other tune. It is very natural to the Religious soul to make God *all things* unto itself, to lay to heart the interest of truth and holiness more than any particular interest of its own; and to bewail the difference done to God, more than any self-incommodation. Must not he needs be a good subject to his Prince, who can more heartily mourn that Gods Laws are not kept, than that he himself is kept under; that can be more grieved that men are cruel, than that they kill him; that can be more troubled because there are oppressions in the world, than because he himself is oppressed? such subjects Religion alone can make.

As for the Cry that is made for *liberty and deliverance*; I confess I do not easily apprehend what is more, or more naturally desirable than true liberty: yea, I believe there are many devout and Religious souls, that from a right noble and generous principle, and out of a sincere respect to the *Author and End* of their creation, are almost intemperately studious of it, do prefer it above all preferments, or any thing that may be properly called sensual, and would purchase it with any thing that they can possibly part with. But yet that I may a little moderate, if not quite stifle this cry, I must freely profess that I do apprehend too much of sensuality generally in it; because this liberty is commonly abstracted from the proper end of it, and desired meerly as a *naturally convenient good*, and not under a right religious consideration. Self-love is the very



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ry heart and centre of the animal life; and doubtless this *natural* principle is as truly covetous of self-preservation, and freedom from all inconveniences, grievances, and confinements, as any *Religious* principle can be. And therefore I may well allude to our Saviour's words, and say, *If you love and desire deliverance only under the notion of a natural good, what do you more than others? Do not even Publicans the same?* But were this divine principle rightly exercising its Sovereignty in the soul, it would value all things, and all estates and conditions, only as they have a tendency to the advancement and nourishment of itself. With what an ordinary, not to say disdainful eye, would the Religious soul look upon the fairest self-accommodations in the world; and be ready to say within itself, What is a meer abstract deliverance from afflictions worth? Wherein is a naked freedom from afflictions to be accounted of? Will this make me a blessed man? Was not profane and impudent *Ham* delivered from the deluge of Water, as well as his brethren? Were not the filthy shameless daughters of *Lot* delivered from the deluge of Fire as well as their Father? And yet we are so far from rising up and calling these people blessed, that the heart of every chaste and modest Christian is ready to rise against the very mention of their names, when he remembers how both the one and the other, though in different sense, discovered their Fathers nakedness. If we did really value our selves by our souls,

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souls; and our souls themselves by what they possess of the Image of God; if we did rightly prefer the advancement of the Divine life before the gratification of the animal; it is easie to conceive how we should prefer patience before prosperity, faith in God before the favour of men, spiritual purity, before temporal pleasures or preferments, humility before honour, the denial of our selves before the approbation of others, the advancement of Gods Image, before the advancement of our own names, an opportunity of exercising gracious dispositions, before the exercising of any temporal power or secular authority, and in a word, the displaying of the beauty, glory and perfections of God before health, wealth, liberty, livelihood, and life itself. We should certainly be more indifferently affected towards any condition, whether prosperity or adversity, and not be so fond of the one, nor weary of the other, if we did verily value them only by the tendency that they had to further Religion, and advance the life of Christ in our souls. This would certainly make men more sincerely studious to reap Gods end in afflicting them, and less longing to see the end of their afflictions.

And as for treacheries, plottings, invasions, usurpations, rebellions, and that tumultuous real for Relaxation, which this impatience of oppression and fondness of deliverance do so often grow up into, I dare say there is nothing like Religion in the power of it, for the eternal healing of them. The true spirit of Religion is not so weary of oppression, though it

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2 Cor. 3. 3. it be by *sinfull men*, as it is abhorrent from deliverance, if it be by *sinfull means*. May I not be allowed to allude to the Apostle, and say, whereas there is amongst you this zeal, contention, and faction, *Are ye not carnal and walk as men?* Is not this the same which a meer natural man would do, strive and struggle by right and by wrang to redeem himself from whatsoever is grievous and galling to the interest of the flesh? Might it not be reasonably supposed, that if Religion did but display itself aright in the powerful actings of faith, hope and humility, it would quench this scalding zeal, and calm these tempestuous motions of the soul, and make men rather content to be delivered up to the *adversary*, though the flesh should by him be destroyed, so by the spirit might be saved, and the divine life advanced in the way of the Lord. Oh how dear and precious are the possession and practice of *faith, patience, humility, and self-denyal* to a godly soul, in comparison of all the joyes and toyes, treasures, pleasures, ease and honour of the world, the safety and liberty of the flesh! How much more then, when these must be accomplished by wicked means, and purchased at the rate of Gods displeasure?

And because the Kingdom of Christ is so often alleadged to defend and parronize these strange fervours and frenzies, let me here briefly record to all that shall read these lines, the way and method of Christ himself in propagating his own Kingdom. It will not be denied but that *Christ* was infinitely studi-

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ous to promote his own Kingdom in the best and most proper sense : But I no where read that he ever attempted it by force or fraud, by violent opposition or crafty insinuation, Nay he reckoned that his Kingdom was then truly promoted, when these tumultuous, impatient, imperious, proud lusts of men were mortified. Nothing had been more easie with him, considering his miraculous power, infallible wisdom, and the mighty interest and party which he could by these have made for himself in the world, than to have raised his own Kingdom upon the ruines of the Roman, and to have quite shuffled *Cæsar* out of the World : but indeed nothing more impossible, considering the perfect innocency and infinite Sacredness of his temper, nor any thing more cantradictionous, considering the proper notion of his Kingdom ; which he professes not to be secular, and so not to be maintained by fighting : But if you would know in what sense he was a King, he himself seems to intimate it in his answer to *Pilate*, *Thou saist that I am a King ; to this end was I born that I should bear witness unto the truth* : So then it seems, where ever there is truth and holiness predominant, there is Christ really enthroned and actually triumphant. Where Religion doth vitally inform, animate, and actuate mens souls, it doth make them rightly to understand, that the Kingdom of Christ is not the thriving of parties, the strengthening of factions, the advancement of any particular interest, though it seem to be of never so Evangelical a complexion ;

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plexion; no nor yet the proselyting of the World to the profession of Christianity, or of the Christian World to the purer and more reformed profession of it ( though these latter would be a great external honour to the person of Christ: ) but that it is most properly and happily propagated in the spirits of men, and that where ever there is faith, patience, humility, self-denial, contempt of this world, and pregnant hopes of a better, pure obedience to God and sincere benignity to men, here and there is the Kingdom of God, Christ Regnant, and the Gospel in the power and triumph of it. And may not these things be, and be most conspicuously, in a persecuted condition of the Church? That certainly was an high instance of the mighty power of the Divine life in our blessed Saviour, which the Apostle Peter records of him, who when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered he threatned not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. The same divine principle dwelling plentifully in our souls, would instruct us to the same behaviour, according to the precept given by the same Apostle, Not rendring evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing, &c. How vainly do men dream that they serve the interest, and advance the Kingdom of Christ, by fierce and raging endeavours to cast off every yoke that galls them, and kicking against every thorn that pricks them; when indeed they serve the interest of the flesh, and do under a fine cloak gratifie the meer animal life, and Sa-

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1 Pet.

2. 3.

1 Pet.

3. 9.

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## To the Reader.

crifice to self-love; which is as covetous of freedom from all retrenchments, and confinements, as Religion it self can be. It is said indeed, that when the Churches had rest, they were *edified and multiplyed*; but when they suffer *according to the will of God*, they are then *glorified*: for the *spirit of glory and of God resteth upon them*.: As the Apostle Paul professes of himself in that most noble and heroical passage of his to the *Corinthians*, *Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

*Acts*  
9. 31.  
1 Pet.  
4. 14.  
2 Cor.  
12. 9.

Secondly, Religion will not fail rightly to dispose the hearts of *subjects towards one another*; and that whether they be of the *same way* and judgement with themselves, or *different*. I dare not assert that it would make them all of the *same way and mind*; neither do I believe it would: yet I am confident it would do more towards this *Catholick union*, than all the *Laws and severities* in the world can. Mutual forbearance and forgiveness, Christian kindness, and discreet condescensions, are the most warrantable, and most effectual method for introducing *uniformity and unanimity* too (which is much better) into the Church of Christ. But however, Religion would certainly give a right disposition, and teach men a right behaviour respective to each other, whether *friends or dissenters*.

This principle would teach men to love their *friends* and accomplices only in the Lord, as his *members*, not as their own *partizans*. Are not they strangely devoted to interest, that will vindicate any thing in a *partizan*, which they

B

will



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will declaim against in a *dissenter*? And yet how is the sacred name of Christian friendship, reproached every where by reason of this partiality! How much better did true Religion instruct the great Apostle to *know no man after the flesh*, no not Christ himself!

The same principle would not fail to cure the distempers of men respective to those that are of a *different way and judgement* from themselves; whether of *Protestants* towards *Protestants*, or *Protestants* and *Papists* one towards another. It would heal the *distempered affections and behaviours* of *Protestants* towards *Protestants*. Were men thoroughly Baptized into the Spirit of *Love and wisdom* (which are so lively pourtrayed by the Apostle St. Paul and St. James, that one might well be enamoured of the very description,) how certainly would all *oppressions, law-suits, disputations* about unprofitable and indeterminable points either be suppressed or sanctified, either not be or not be vexatious! Not to speak of the *oppression* done by over-reaching, stealing, lying, false-witness bearing, slanderous detractions, envious suggestions, and malignant dissemination of doubtful suspicions, (by which commonly poor men oppress the rich;) all which true Religion abhors: There is a great oppression that goes uncontrolled in the World, which is, by the cruel *engrossings* and covetous *insatiable tradings* of richer men. What these are *intentionally* I will not say, but that they are really and eventually as great *oppressions*, as those *inhumane depopulations*,

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tions; and squeezing exactions; which are so much inveighed against, I doubt not. But be they what they will, or be they excused how they will, I am confident that this Divine principle that powerfully springs up into everlasting life, would mightily relieve the world in this respect; in that it would moderate mens desires of corruptible riches, forbid them to seek the things of this world any more or any otherwise than in consistency with, and subserviency to their primary and most diligent seeking of the Kingdom of God: it would make men seek the wealth of others even as their own, and make private advantages stoop to the publick good. I do verily believe that if there were none but good men in *England*, there would be no poor men there. Civil Laws may provide for the maintenance of the poor; but the Law of Divine Loye, a principle of Religion, if it were universally obeyed, would make men so nobly regardless of earthly accommodations, that there would soon be room enough for all men to thrive into a sufficient stature; and then being so grown, they would covet no more.

In *Law-suits* (if there were any) men would seek the advancement of *truth*, and not of their own *cause* and interest distinct from it.

And oh how excellently would it still the noise of *axes* and *hammers* about the Temple of God! It would take men off from vain speculations and much eagerness about  
B 2 unnecessary

## To the Reader.

unnecessary opinions ; by imploying them in more substantial and important studies. The very being of Religion in the soul would indeed decide a world of controversies, which the Schools have long laboured in vain to determine. For I reckon that these *Schoolistical wars*, ( fitly called *Polemicks*, ) like those civil dissentions spoken of by the Apostle *Jam. James*, do for the most part spring from mens lusts that war in their members ; such as *pride*, *curiosity*, *lasciviency of wit*, *disobedience and unsubduedness of understanding*, and the like. I have observed with great grief, how the spirits of many men, I had almost said sects of men, run out wholly into disputes about *Ceremonies pro and con*, about *Church-Government*, about what is *orthodox*, and what is *beterodox*, about the *true* and the *false Church* ( which commonly they judge by something external, and indeed separable from the essence of a true Church ; ) and hereabout is their zeal, their conference, and their very prayers themselves mostly bestowed. Who can doubt but that Religion in the power of it would find men something else to do ; yea and if it could not perfectly determine these niceties, yet it would much heal our dissentions about them, and bring tears to quench the strange and unnatural heats that are amongst us, and cause such dreadful inflammations in our bowels.

But it may seem that there is such a fatal enmity and irreconcilable feud betwixt *Papists and Protestants*, that nothing, no not Religion

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Religion it self can heal it. And truly if we suppose that it is *Religion* that engages both parties in this enmity, I think it will prove incurable; But God forbid that this pure off-spring of Heaven should be so blasphemed! It is not *Religion*, but indeed the want of it that begets this implacable animosity, whatever is pretended. *Cruel Religion, Bloody Religion, Selfish Religion, Envious and Revengeful Religion!* Who can choose but cry out of the blasphemy of this contradiction at the very first hearing? Nay I dare affirm it without hesitation, that the more *Religious* any *Protestant* or *Papist* is, the more abhorrent he is from *brutish savageness, wicked Revenge, and devilish Hatred.* The *Church of Rome* judges the *Reformed Hereticks* are not fit to live; and why? Not because they live not well, but because they cannot think and believe as they do. And is this the genuine product of true Religion? Nothing less. For a desire of ruling over mens Consciences, and of subjecting the faith of others to themselves, is certainly competible to a meer natural man, nay to the Devil himself, who is as lordly, cruel, and imperious as any other. The *Reformed Churches* on the other hand, are (I doubt) generally more offended at the *Papists* for their persecutions of them, than for their real persecuting and Crucifying Christ afresh by their sins; and so consequently, do rather *write and fight* against them, than either *pitty* or *pray* for them.

## To the Reader.

I hope there are as many well-spirited Christians in *England*, at least proportionably, as in any Church upon earth; and yet I fear there are far more that could wish the Papists out of *this world*, than that earnestly desire that they might be fitted for, and so counted worthy of a *better*. And doth this spring from a *Religious* principle think ye, or a *selfish*? Doth it not agree well to the animal life, and natural self to be tender of its own interest and concernments, to wish well to its own safety, to defend itself from violence? May I not allude to our Saviours

*Mat.* words, and say, *If ye hate them that hate you,*  
*9. 46. how can that be accounted Religious? Do not even the Publicans the same?* I doubt we know not sufficiently what spirit we should be of. The power of Religion rightly prevailing in the soul would mold us into another kind of temper; it would teach us as well to love and pity and pray for *Papists*, as to hate *Popery*. I know the Prophecie indeed, that the Beast and the false Prophet

*Mat.*  
*9. 44.*  
*Rev.*  
*19.*  
*20.*  
*21.*

shall be cast alive into the lake burning with brimstone, and the remnant shall be slain with the sword of him that sate upon the horse: But in as much as that sword is said to proceed out of his mouth; I would

*Eph.*  
*6. 17.*

gladly interpret it of the word of God, which kills men unto Salvation. However, let the

*Hos.*  
*6. 5.*

interpretation of that Text and others of the like importance be what it will, I reckon it very unsafe to turn all the Prophecies and threatnings of God unto Prayers; lest hap-ly

## To the Reader.

ly we should be found to contribute to the  
damning of mens souls. Yea, when all is <sup>2 Thes.</sup>  
said, concerning the reprobating decrees of <sup>2. 12.</sup>  
God, and his essential inflexible *punitive*  
*justice*; and all those Texts that seem to  
speak of Gods revenging himself with de-  
light, are interpreted to the utmost harm-  
ness of meaning that the cruel wit of man  
can invent; yet it remains a sealed, and to  
me a sweet truth, *I have no pleasure in the* <sup>Exek. 18.</sup>  
*death of him that dyeth, saith the Lord God:* <sup>32.</sup>  
and again, *As I live saith the Lord God,* <sup>chap.</sup>  
*I have no pleasure in the death of the wick-* <sup>33.</sup>  
*ed.* Wherefore to wave all those dreadful <sup>11.</sup>  
glosses ( that do rather describe the bitter  
and revengeful ingeny of man that makes  
them, than interpret the pure and perfect  
nature of God upon whom they are made, )  
let us attend to that beautiful character that  
is every where given of Religion ( which is <sup>Exod.</sup>  
our highest concernment ) in the person of <sup>32.</sup>  
Moses, of Paul, and of Christ Jesus himself <sup>32.</sup>  
the Author and exemplar of it; who by his <sup>Numb.</sup>  
incarnation, life and death, abundantly demon- <sup>11.</sup>  
strated the infinite Benignity and compas- <sup>29.</sup>  
sionate ardours of his soul towards us, when <sup>Rom.</sup>  
we were worse than *Papists*, as being out of <sup>9. 2, 3.</sup>  
a possibility of salvation without him: and <sup>Luke.</sup>  
*let that mind be in us, which was in him also.* <sup>19.</sup>  
Though it be not directly our Saviours mean- <sup>10.</sup>  
ing in my Text, yet I believe it is <sup>Act.</sup>  
*redu-* <sup>10.</sup>  
*ctively*, that this pure and divine principle <sup>10.</sup>  
Religion springs up into everlasting life, not <sup>38.</sup>  
only *our own*, but *other mens* also. But <sup>Rom.</sup>

### To the Reader.

however Religion is described, sure I am it is most unnatural to the Religious soul that is regenerated into the pure spirit of *piety*, *pitty*, and *universal charity*, to be of a *cruel*, *fierce*, *vengeful*, *davning* disposition. And therefore, whatever are the Ranting and Wrathful strains of some mens Devotions, I beseech the Reader to endeavour with me: that *Charity* towards mens souls may go along in conjunction with *zeal* and *piety* towards God, when we present our selves before the Throne of his Grace: And so I am confident it will, if we pray sincerely to this purpose, viz. *That God would cause the wickedness of the wicked to come to an end, that he would consume the Antichrist but Convert the Papist, and make the wonderers after the Beast to become followers of the Lamb!* I doubt there are many, that think they can never be too liberal in wishing ill to the *Papists*; nay they count it a notable argument of a good *Protestant*, I had almost said an *evidence of grace*, to be very raging and invective against them. Alas, how miserably do we bewray our selves in so doing, to be nothing less, than what we pretend to by doing it! For are not we our selves herein *Antichristian*: whilest we complain of their cruelties, our own souls in the very act boyling over with *Revengeful* and scalding affections? If we do indeed abhor their cruelty, because it is contrary to the holy precepts of the Gospel, and the true Kingdom



*To the Reader.*

dom of Christ, we ought to be as jealous at the same time lest any thing like unto it should be found in our selves: otherwise are we not carnal? For meer nature, as I have often said, will abhor any thing that is contrary to it self, and will not willingly suffer its delicate interest to be toucht. The Apostle tells us, that no man speaking by the *Spirit of Christ*, calleth Christ accursed; *1 Cor.* But I doubt it is common to curse *Anti-* *12. 31* *christ*, and yet by a spirit that is *Antichristi-* *an*, I mean, carnal, selfish, cruel, and uncharitable. For there is a *spiritual Anti-christ*, or if you will in the Apostles phrase, a *Spirit of Antichrist*, as well as a *political* *1 John* *Antichrist*, and I doubt the former prevails *4. 3.* most in the world, though it be least discerned and bann'd. Men do by *Antichrist*, as they do by the *Devil*, defie him in words, but entertain him in their hearts, run away from the appearance of him, and in the mean time can be well enough content to be all that in very deed which the *Devil* and *Antichrist* is. All this evidently appears to be for want of the true power and spirit of Religion, which I commend for so great a healer, even the *τὸ πάλαιον* of our distempers.

Perhaps no *Papist* will find in his heart to read this Epistle written by a *Heretick*: yet possibly too, some one or other may: therefore I will adventure briefly to prescribe this same medicinal Divinity to them also; though perhaps I might be excused

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Upon another account, all that which I have hitherto said be distempered Protestants being rightly enough (*mutatis mutandis*) applicable to them. But moreover, whereas they value their Church, and the truth and rightness of it by its *universality* and *prosperity*: the power of *Religion* would make men to value themselves, and their adherents, only by the divine impressions of *piety* and *purity*, and to account such only worthy of the glorious title of *Apostolical* and *children of God*, who are sincere followers of the Apostles, wherein they were followers of Christ, *viz.* in *true holiness* and *righteousness*. Are they industrious and zealous for the Proselyting of the world, and spreading of their interest far and near? And are not all *wicked men*, yea, and the *Devil* himself so too? The fairest and most flourishing state of a Church is nothing to God, and so consequently not to a godly soul, in comparison of those excellent divine beauties, wherewith *Religion* adorneth the world. But whereas the greatest complaint, and the most dreadful charge which the Protestants bring against the *Papists*, is their immanity and most unchristian cruelty, exercised against all whom they can but make a shift to esteem *Hereticks*; and they on the other hand alledge, that the interest of *Religion* and the *Catholic faith* doth require it, and that they do not so properly *murder* men, as *sacrifice* them to the honour of God: It will be proper  
John 16. 2. to spend a little time, at least to clear Religion

## To the Reader.

ligion of this blame ; that as wisdom is at all times justified of and in her children, so she may be sometimes justified by them, especially when the aspersions are so monstrous foul. And indeed she hath sufficiently instructed us how to justify her from all such imputations ; having so fairly portrayed her self by the pen of the Apostle *James*, both negatively and affirmatively. She is void of *strife, envyings, bitterness, and every evil work* ; but she is *pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy*. This is the proper description of heavenly wisdom or pure Religion : And oh that all Christians would estimate themselves to be wise according to their consonancy and conformity thereto. Then I would easily believe that none would be *Papists* in practice, whatever they might be in opinion. What (Sirs,) is the God of Christians become like unto a Devil ; that he should delight in cruelty, and drink the blood of men ? Is the butchering of reasonable creatures that reasonable service which he requires ? Is the living sacrifice of your own bodies turned into the dead sacrifice of other mens ? It was wont to be said, *What communion hath Christ with Belial* ; And is the Prince of Peace now become very *Sathan* ; the author of enmity, malignity, confusion, and every evil work ? Did he shed his blood for his enemies ; to teach us that goodly lesson of shedding the blood of ours ? Did he come to seek and to save

## To the Reader.

*Save that which was lost; to set us an exam-*  
 9. 56. *ple, that we might seek to destroy, and that*  
*only to repair our own losses? Be it so,*  
*that the Protestant Churches have apostat-*  
*ized from you: this I hope is not a greater*  
*crime than the apostasie of mankind from*  
*God; which yet he expiated, not with the*  
*blood of the Apostates, but with his own.*  
*Religion was formerly a principle springing*  
*up into eternal life; How is the world changed,*  
*that it should now be a principle springing*  
*up into Massacres, and temporal death? or is*  
*Religion now become a principle springing*  
*up into secular power, worldly dominion, tem-*  
*poral greatness, and all manner of fleshly ac-*  
*commodations? This was of old the descripti-*  
*on of sensuality, and a heathenish genius,*  
 32. *Are there so many mighty engines in the*  
*Gospel to engage the hearts of men to be-*  
*lieve, profess, and obey it; And must they*  
*all now give place to Fire and Sword? Are*  
*these the only Gospel-methods of winning*  
*men to the Catholick faith? What, are we*  
*wiser for Christ, or more zealous than he*  
*himself was? Did he forbid fire from hea-*  
*ven; and will you fetch it even from hell,*  
 9. 55. *to consume dissenters. Did he sheath the*  
*sword that was drawn in his own defence,*  
*and set a dreadfull seal upon it too, πάντες*  
*οἱ λαβόντες μάχαιραν ἐν μάχαιρα ὑπολεί-*  
 Mat. *ται all they that take the sword, shall perish*  
 26. *with the sword: And will you adventure to*  
 52. *draw it in a way of revenge and persecution;*  
and

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and count it *meritorious* too, as if you should therefore never perish because you take it? Is it not written in your Bibles as well as ours, that *no murderer shall enter into the Kingdom of God*; And do you think by *murders* to propagate this Kingdom upon earth, and have a more abundant entrance into it your selves hereafter? Can *Hell* dwell with *Heaven*? shall bloody *cruelty* ever come to lodge in the bosome, or lye down in the sacred arms of eternal *love*? Be not deceived, *Sirs*, with a false *Heaven*; but take this for an indubitable and self-evidencing Aphorism of truth, *No soul of man hath any more of Heaven, no nor ever shall have, than he hath of God, and of his pure, placable, patient, benign, and gracious nature.* And this is that *everlasting life* which a Religious principle is alwayes springing up into; so that hereby it appears plainly, that *Religion* in the power of it would heal these *feaverish* distempers also, and so restore a most excellent constitution, both *personal* and *political*.

It may seem possibly that I have toy'd too much in these discoveries: and happily my pains may prove ungrateful to many: but may it please Almighty God that they may prove *vindicative* of Religion, *restorative* of the sickly and lapsed Ecclesiastical or political state, yea, or *medicinal* and *profitable* to any single soul of man, I shall venture to estimate it against an age of pains. And if it should prove, that by *Luke* all this toyl I have caught nothing (as the *5. 5.* weary

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weary Disciples complained of old ) nevertheless being well assured that I have a word of God for my encouragement , I will *let down the Net* once again , and so finish these Epistolary pains with an earnest hortatory address to all that shall peruse them.

Let nothing satisfy your souls ( *Christians* , ) let nothing administer rest or settlement to your hearts , that is common to the *natural man*, or competent to the meer animal life. There are a great many high strains of zeal and seeming devotion , by which many men judge themselves to be *some great ones* , and concerning which they are ready to say, These things are the great power of God ; which if they be well rifled into , will be found to grow upon no better root than *natural self* , and to spring from no higher principle than this *animal life*. It is impossible for me to give an exact Catalogue of all these : many of them I have occasionally recorded in the latter end of this ensuing Treatise ; to which yet many more might be added , if I had a fair opportunity. But at present , let me in general commend to you this description made by our Saviour of true Religion , as the Rule whereby I do earnestly intreat you faithfully to examine *your selves, your actions, affections, zeal, confidence, professions, performances*. Let me speak freely , All *pomp of worship* , all *speculative knowledge* ( though never so *Orthodox* ) is as dear to the *animal life* as the *divine* :  
and

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and all external models of devotion, *submits* confessions, devout hymns, *pathetical* prayers, raptures of joy, much zeal to reform *indecencies* in worship or superstitions, a fierce raging against the political Antichrist do as well agree to a natural man as a *spiritual*, and may be as fairly acted over to see to, by a meer selfish carnal principle, as by that which is truly *divine*. When Diogenes trampled upon Plato's stately bed, saying *calco Platonis fastum*; it was answered him very sharply, *sed majore fastu*, he was prouder in treading upon it, than Plato was in lying upon it. I doubt it may be applied too truly to a great deal of that *cynical* and *fornful* zeal, that is in the world at this day; men decry against the pride and pomp and grandeur of Antichristian Prelates, with a pride no whit inferiour to theirs whom they thus decry. However it is plain, that those things which are imitable by a *sensual* heart, and indeed performable by the meer magick of an exalted fancy, are not to be rested in by a sincere Christian. Read over therefore I beseech you the *fruits of the spirit*, Gal. 5. recorded by the Apostle Paul and the Apostle Peter, and estimate your selves by them; These things are utterly incompetent to the meer animal man: All the natural men and Devils in the world cannot be humble, meek, self-denying, patient, charitable, lovers of God more than of themselves, or, of their enemies as themselves. Would you judge rightly of the goodness of any opinion? then value it by



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by the tendency that is in it to advance the life of God : particularly judge of the *millenarian* opinion, which begins to be so much hugged in the world. Concerning which I will only say thus much at present : that in the common notion of it, as it promises a state of much *ease, liberty, power, prosperity, and freedom from all persecutions and oppressions*, it is as grateful to the *fleshy* palate, and will be as gladly embraced by the meer *animal* man, as by the greatest *Saint* upon earth. And therefore supposing it to be true, yet I cannot but wonder how it comes to administer so much satisfaction, and afford such a marvellous relish to minds divinely principled, as many seem to taste in it. By this same tendency to advance the divine life in your souls, judge also of your *enjoyments, riches, honours, liberties, friends, health, children, &c.* and value them, if it be possible, *only* under this consideration. But to hasten to an end, I will endeavour to set on this general exhortation by two or three weighty considerations. *First*, It is utterly impossible that any *speculation, opinion, profession, enjoyment, ornament, performance*, or any other thing but the *transformation* of the mind into the very image and nature of God, should ever be able to *perfect* our souls, or *commend us unto God*. They cannot *perfect* our souls, as being most of them *exterior*, and all of them *inferiour* to it. They cannot *commend* a man to God, who loves us, and whom we so far know and love, as  
we

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we partake of his nature, and resemble him : This is the *love* of God , this is the *worship* of God , and this is really the souls *acquaintance* with him , and nothing but this. *Secondly* , The advancement of the divine life is that which God *mainly designs in the world*. I need instance but in two things : *first* , the sending of his own son into the world for this very end and purpose , that he might take away our sins , sayes the Apostle <sup>1 John 3.5,8.</sup> John ; and again that he might destroy the works of the Devil ; and again sayes the Apostle Paul , That he might redeem us from all iniquity ; and purifie to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. *Secondly* , It appears <sup>Tit. 2. 14.</sup> that this is the grand design of God in the world, in as much as he doth not deliver his faithful servants out of their afflictions and tribulations : which he would not fail to do, did he not intend them a greater good thereby, and design to lead them on, and raise them up to a *higher life*. Now what can more ennoble these souls of ours, than to live upon the same design with God himself?

And now ( Reader ) I commend thee to the blessing of God , in the perusal of this small tract : which I have composed , and now exposed , under a sense of that common obligation , that lyes upon every person , to be active in his sphere for the interest of the name and honour of God , and to render his life as useful as he may : *more particularly* , under a sense of my own deficiency in several accomplishments, where-  
by

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by others are better fitted to serve their generation : and *especially*, under a sense of the peculiar engagement that lyeth upon me, to dedicate my life entirely to his service, from whom I have so *lately*, and that so *signally* received the same afresh : In imitation of whom, I hope thou wilt be indulgent towards my infirmities. To whom I heartily commend thee, and to the precious influences of his Eternal Spirit, and Rest,

Thy Servant in his Work,  
and for his Sake,

S. S.

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CHAP.

## CHAP. I.

*The occasion of the words of the Text; the principal contents of it. The original of true Religion. All Souls the Offspring of God, and a more especial Portraiture of Him, but godly Souls yet more especially. God the Author of Religion from without, in several respects. God the Author of it from within enlightning the faculty; Religion something of God in the Soul. A discovery of religious Men by the affinity that they have to God. God alone to be acknowledged in all holy Accomplishments. The original of Sin from hence discovered.*

John 4. 41.

Ὅς δ' αὖν πίη ἐκ τῆς ὕδατος ἃ ἐγὼ δώσω αὐτῷ, ἔ μὴ διψήσῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα; ἀλλὰ τὸ ὕδωρ ὃ δώσω αὐτῷ γενήσεται ἐν αὐτῷ πηγὴ ὕδατος ἀλλομένη εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting Life.

**T**HIS Chapter contains an excellent, profitable, familiar discourse of the blessed Saviour of the World, into whose

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whose Lips grace was poured, *Psalms* 45. 2. and he ceased not to pour it out again: That which is said of the *Wife*, *Prov.* 15. 7. is fully verified of *Wisdom* it self, His Lips dispersed Knowledge. A poor Woman of *Samaria* comes to draw Water, and our Saviour takes occasion from the Water, to instruct her in the great and excellent Doctrines of the Kingdom of Heaven. Oh the admirable zeal for God, and compassion for Souls, which dwelt in that Divine Breast! And Oh the wonderful unsearchable Counsels of an all-wise God! He ordains *Saul's* seeking of Asses to be the means of his finding a Kingdom upon Earth; and this poor Woman's seeking of Water, to be an occasion of her finding the way to the Kingdom of Heaven: She comes to the *Well of Jacob*, and behold she meets with the *God of Jacob* there. The Occasion, Passages, and Issue of this Discourse, would each afford many good and profitable Observations: But I think none more than this verse that I have pitch'd upon; in which the mysterie of Gospel-God is rarely unfolded, and true Christian

Christian Religion is excellently described. For so I understand our Saviour, not as speaking of Faith or Knowledge, or any other particular Grace, but of Grace in general, of the holy Spirit of God, that is, the Gifts and Graces of it, of true Godliness, or if you will, of Christian Religion; for that word I shall choose to retain throughout my Discourse, as being most intelligible and comprehensive.

In which words we find true Christian Religion unfolded in the *original, nature, properties, consequent, and end* of it. The *original* of it is found in those words, [ *I shall give him:* ] The *nature* of it is described by a [ *Well of Water;* ] The *properties* of it will be found in the phrase of [ *springing up;* ] The *consequent* of it, that the man that is endued with it shall [ *never thirst;* ] The *end* or perfection of it is, [ *everlasting Life.* ] Of all these, by Gods assistance, in this order:

First, I begin with the *Original* of it, as it seems meet I should: for indeed it is first found in the words, --- *The Water that I shall give him.* And here  
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the Proposition that I shall go upon must be, That;

*True Christian Religion is of a Divine Original.* All Souls are indeed the Offspring of God. Those Noble Faculties of *Understanding*, and a *Will free from constraint*, do more resemble the nature of God, than all the World besides. There is more of the glory, beauty, and brightness of God in a Soul, than there is in the Sun it self. The Apostle allows it as a proper speech spoken in common of all men, *καὶ γὰρ γένεθ' ἔσμεν*, *Acts 17. 28.* God hath derived more lively prints of himself and his Divine Essence upon a rational Soul, than he hath upon the whole Creation: so that the Soul of man even as to its constitution, doth declare and discover more of the nature of God, than all the other things that he hath made, whereof the Apostle speaks, *Rom. 1. 20.* He that rightly converseth with his own Soul, will get more acquaintance with God, than they that gaze continually upon the *material Heavens*, or traverse the dark and utmost corners of the Earth, *Or go down unto the Sea in Ships*; the serious



rious consideration of the *little World*, will teach more of him than the *great* one could do: So that I doubt not to take the Apostles words concerning the *Word of God*, and apply them to the *Nature of God*, Rom. 10. *Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into Heaven, to bring a discovery of God from thence? or who shall descend into the Deep, to fetch it up from thence?* The Nature and Essence of God is nigh thee, even in thine own Soul, excellently displayed in the Constitution and Frame, Powers and Faculties thereof: God hath not made any Creature so capable of receiving and reflecting his Image and Glory, as Angels and Men: Which hath made me often to say, That the vilest Soul of Man is much more beautiful and honourable than the most excellent Body, than the very Body of the Sun at noon day. And (by the way) this may render Sin odious and loathsome; because it hath defiled the fairest piece of Gods Workmanship in the World, and blurred the clearest Copy which he had drawn of himself in the whole Creation,

But

But though all rational Souls be the Children of God, yet all of them do not imitate their Father; though their *Constitution* do expresse much of the Essence of God, yet their *Disposition* doth expresse the Image of the Devil. But godly Souls, who are *followers of God*, are indeed his *dear Children*, *Ephes. 5. 1.* Holy Souls, who are endued with a divine and god-like disposition, and do work the works of God, these are most truly and properly his Off-spring, *Mat. 5. 44, 45.* And in this respect, Gods Children are his *workmanship created unto good Works*, *Ephes. 2. 10.* Religion is of a Divine Original: God is the Author and Father of it, both *from without*, and *from within*.

1. God is the Author of it *from without*. When Man had fallen from God by sin, and so had lost his way, and was become both unwilling and unable to return, God was pleased to set up that glorious Light his own Son, *the Sun of Righteousness*, in the World, that he might guide their feet into the way of peace, who is therefore called, *A Light to lighten the Gentiles*, *Luk. 2. 32.* and

and compared to a Candle set upon a Candlestick, *Mark 4. 21.* God of his infinite free grace, and overflowing goodness, provided a Mediator, in and by whom these Apostate Souls might be reconciled and re-united to himself; and to as many as receive him, to them he giveth power to become the Sons of God, *John 1. 12.*

Yet further, It pleased God in his infinite Wisdom and Mercy, to chalk out the way of Life and Peace in the holy Scriptures, and therein to unlock the secrets of Salvation to succeeding generations. Herein he hath plainly laid down the terms of the Covenant of Peace, which was made in the Mediator, and given Precepts and Promises for the direction and encouragement of as many as will enquire into the same. These are the sacred Oracles which give clear and certain answers to all that do consult them about their future state, *Rom. 3. 2.* Christ Jesus opened the way into the holiest of all, and the Scriptures they come after, and point it out unto us: He purchased life

*and immortality; and these bring it to light, 2 Tim. 1. 10.*

And yet further, That these might not be mistaken, or perverted to mens destruction, which were ordain'd for their salvation ( which sometimes doth come to pass, 2 Pet. 3. 16. ) God hath been pleased to commit these Records into the hands of his Church, and therein to his Ministers, whom he hath appointed, called, qualified, instructed, for the opening, explaining, interpreting and applying of them : so that they are called *Scribes instructed unto the Kingdom of God, and stewards of the Mysteries*, Stewards over the household of God, to give unto every one his portion. These Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers, God hath given for the perfecting of the Saints, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, Ephes. 4. 11, 12.

These things hath God done for us, *from without us*; he hath set up a light, chalk'd out our way, and appointed us Guides. To which I might add the many inticements and motives, which we call Mercies or Comforts of this Life;

*of the Divine Nature.*

Life; and the many affrightments of Judgements and Afflictions, which God hath added to the Promises and Threatnings of his Word, to bring us into the way of Life. But all these are too little, too weak of themselves to bring back a stragling Soul, or to produce a living Principle of true Religion in it. Therefore,

2. God is the Author of Religion *from within*. He doth not only reveal himself and his Son to the Soul, but *in* it; he doth not only make discoveries to it, but lively impressions upon it; he doth not only appoint, and point out the way of Life, but breathes in the breath of Life. He hath not only provided a Saviour, a Redeemer, but he also draws the Soul unto him, *John 6. 44.* He hath not only appointed *Pastors and Teachers*, but he himself impregnates their Word, and cloaths their Doctrine with his own Power, using their Ministry as an Instrument whereby to teach; so that the Children of God are said to be *all taught of God, John 6. 45.* Ministers can only discover, and as it were enlighten the

*Object*, but God enlightens the *faculty*, he gives the seeing Eye, and does actually enable it to discern. Therefore the work of converting a Soul is still ascribed to God in Scripture; he begets us again, *1 Pet.* 1. 3. he draws the Soul, before it can run after him, *Cant.* 1. 4. Christ apprehends the Soul, lays powerful hold of it, *Phil.* 3. 12. God gives a heart of flesh, a new heart, he causes men to walk in his statutes, *Ezek.* 36. 26, 27. He puts his Law into their inward parts, and writes it in their hearts, *Jer.* 31. 33. To which I might adde many more Quotations of the same value.

But yet methinks we are not come to a perfect discovery of Religions being the Off-spring of God in the minds of men. For it is God who enlightneth the faculty as to the learning of all other things also; he teacheth the *Grammar* and the *Rhetorick*, as well as the *Divinity*; he instructeth even the Husbandman to discretion in his affairs of Husbandry, and teaches him to plow, and sow, and thresh, &c. *Isa.* 28. 26. Not only the gift of Divine Know-

Knowledge, but indeed every good gift cometh from the Father of Lights, *Jam. 1. 17.* God doth from within give that capacity, illumination of the faculty, ingenuity, whereby we comprehend the mysteries of Nature, as well as of Grace, *John 1. 9.*

Therefore we may conceive of the Original of Religion in a more inward and spiritual manner still. It is not so much given of God, as it self is something of God in the Soul; as the Soul is not so properly said to give, as to be the Life of Man. As the conjunction of the Soul with the Body, is the Life of the Body; so verily the Life of the Soul stands in its conjunction with God by a spiritual union of Will and Affections. God doth not enlighten mens minds as the Sun enlightens the World, by shining *unto* them, and round about them, but by shining *into* them, by enlightning the faculty, as I said before, yea, which seems to be somewhat more, by shining in their hearts, as the Apostle phraseth it, *2 Cor. 4. 6.* He sets up a Candle, which is his own Light within the Soul; so that the Soul sees God



in his own Light, and loves him with the Love that he hath shed abroad in it; and Religion is no other than a reflection of that Divine Image, Life, and Light, and Love, which from God are stamped and imprinted upon the Souls of true Christians. God is said to enlighten the Soul, but it is not as the Sun enlightens, you see; so he draws the Soul too, but not *ab extra* only, as one man draweth another with a Cord, (as *Jupiter* in *Homer* draws men up to Heaven by a Chain, and *Mahomet* his Disciples by a Lock of Hair) but he draws the Soul, as the Sun draws up Earthly Vapours, by infusing its virtue and power into them; or as the Loadstone draws the Iron, by the powerful insinuations of his grace. God doth not so much communicate himself to the Soul by way of *Discovery*, as by way of *Impression*, as I said before; and indeed not so much by *impression* neither, as by a mystical and wonderful way of *implantation*. Religion is not so much something from God, as something of God in the Minds of good Men; for so the Scripture allows us to speak :

speak : It is therefore called his *Image*,  
*Col. 3. 10.* and good men are said to  
*live according to God in the Spirit, 1 Pet.*  
*4. 6.* But as if that were not high  
 enough, it is not only called his *Image*,  
 but even a participation of his Divine  
 Nature, *2 Pet. 1. 4.* something of Christ  
 in the Soul, an infant-Christ, as one  
 calls it, alluding to the Apostle, *Gal. 4.*  
*19.* where the saving knowledge of  
 Christ, is called *Christ himself*, — *Un-*  
*till Christ be formed in you.* True Re-  
 ligion is as it were God dwelling in the  
 Soul, and Christ dwelling in the Soul,  
 as the Apostles *St. John* and *St. Paul*  
 do express it : yea, God himself is  
 pleased thus to express his relation to  
 the godly Soul, *Isa. 57. 15.* *I dwell in*  
*the high and holy place, with him also*  
*that is of a humble spirit ;* And again,  
*2 Cor. 6. 16.* — *As God hath said, I*  
*will dwell in them, and walk in them.*  
 Pure Religion is a beam of the Father  
 of Lights, *Lumen de Lumine* ; it is a  
 drop of that eternal Fountain of Good-  
 ness and Holiness, the Breath of the  
 Power of God, a pure Influence flow-  
 ing from the Glory of the Almighty,

the Brightness of the everlasting Light, the unspotted Mirrour of the Power of God, and the Image of his Goodness, more beautiful than the Sun, and above all the Orders of Stars, being compared with the Light, she is found before it; as the Author of the Book of *Wisdom* speaks, Chap. 7. What is spoken of the eternal Son of God, *Heb. i. 3.* may in a sense be truly affirmed of Religion in the abstract, That βλάσημα τῆ ὑψότητος, that it is ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ τῆς δόξης, the effulgency, or beaming forth of Divine Glory. For there is more of the Divine Glory and Beauty shining forth in one godly Soul, than in all things in the World beside: The glorious Light of the Sun is but a dark shadow of the Divine Light, not to be compared with the Beauty of Holiness. An immortal Soul doth more resemble the Divine Nature, than any other created Being; but Religion in the Soul is a thousand times more divine than the Soul it self. The material World is indeed a darker Representation of Divine Wisdom, Power, und Goodness; it is as it were the *footsteps* of God: the

the immaterial World of Angels and Spirits does represent him *more clearly*, and are the *Face of God*: but Holiness in the Soul doth most nearly resemble him of all created Things, one may call it the *Beauty and glory of his Face*. Every Creature partakes of God indeed; he had no Copy but himself and his own Essence to frame the World by; so that all these must needs carry some resemblance of their Maker. But no Creature is capable of such communications of God, as a rational immortal Spirit is; and the highest that Angel or Spirit, or any created Nature can be made capable of, is to be *holy as God is holy*. So then if the Poet may call the Soul, and St. Paul allows him in it, — *Divine particula aure*; sure one may rather speak at that rate of Religion, which is the highest perfection that the Soul can attain to, either in the World that now is, or that which is to come. One Soul, any one Soul of man, is worth all the World beside for glory and dignity; but the lowest degree of true Holiness, pure Religion, Conformity to the Divine Nature and

Will, is more worth than a World of Souls, and to be preferr'd before the Essence of Angels. I have often admir'd three great Mysteries and Mercies, God revealed in the *Flesh*, God revealed in the *Word*, and God revealed in the *Soul*: This last is the *Mystery of Godliness* which I am speaking of, but cannot fathom: It is this that the Apostle says transcends the sight of our Eyes, the capacity of our Ears, and all the faculties of our Souls too, *1 Cor. 2.9. Eye hath not seen, &c.* Christ Jesus formed in the Soul of Man, incarnate in a heart of Flesh, is as great a Miracle, and a greater Mercy, than Christ formed in the Womb of a Virgin, and incarnate in a humane Body. There was once much glorying concerning Christ in the World, the Hope of *Israel*, but let us call out to the powers of Eternity, and the Ages of the World to come, to help us to celebrate and magnifie Christ in us the hope of *Glory*; or if you will, Christ in us the first fruits of *Glory*.

This

1. This will then help us in our discoveries of that precious pearl Religion. There is nothing in the World that men do generally more *seek*, or less *find*: no Nation in the world but hath courted it in one way or other; but alas how few that have obtained it! At this day there are many claims laid to it, all pretending a just title: the men of *Judah* cry, she is of *Kin* to us; the men of *Israel* say, we have ten parts in this Queen, and we have more right in Religion than ye; according as they contended of old about King *David*, 2 *Sam.* 19. They say of Christ as it was foretold, (though perhaps not in the same sense as was foretold.) loe here he is, and loe there he is; which hath made many say, he is not at all, or if I may go on in the same allusion, they live by the rule that there follows, they will not go forth to seek him any where. Mighty strivings, yea and wars there have been about the Prince of peace, whose he should be: And at this day no question more debated, nor less decided, than which is the Religious party in the Land. Oh would

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to God, men would dispute this controverſie with *works* and not with *words*, much leſs with *blows*? Religion is of an eminent pedigree, of a noble deſcent, you may find her name in the Register of Heaven, and look where God is, there is ſhe. She carries her name in her forehead; the Divine diſpoſition that ſhe is of, the Divine works which ſhe worketh, which no one elſe can work, the ſame do bear witneſs which is ſhe. I am ready to ſay with the man that had been blinde, *Joh. 9. 3.* herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not Religion, who ſhe is, and yet ſhe is the (mighty power of God opening the eyes, changing the hearts, and as it were deifying the ſouls of men. Why do we not alſo go about enquiring which of thoſe many ſtars is the Moon in the Firmament? If ye ask of the Religious party, I will point you to the bleſſed and eternal God, and ſay, *As he is, ſo are they*, in their capacity, *each one reſembling the Children of a King*; or I will point out the Religious Chriſtian by the ſame token, as

Chriſt



Christ himself was marked out to *John* the Baptist, Joh. 1. 33. — *upon whom thou shalt see the spirit descending and remaining, the same is he.* If ye enquire about the Children of God, the Apostle shall describe them for you, *Ephes. 5. 1.* The followers of God are his dear Children. That which is most nearly allyed to the nature and life of God, that call Religion, under whatsoever disguises or reproaches it may go in the world. Examine the world by no lower a mark, than that Character that is given of *David*, 1 *Sam.* 13. 14. and the man that doth appear to be after Gods heart, viz: conformable to his Image, compliant with his will, and studious of his glory, pitch upon him, for that is that man, under what name soever he goes, of what party or faction soever he is. And let no soul examine it self by any lower marks than this *ὅτι τὸ εἶδος ἐνδοξόν*, participation of the Divine Nature, conformity to the Divine Image. Examine what alliance your soul hath to God; *whose is the image and superscription.* Religion is a divine accomplishment,

plishment, an efflux from God, and may by its affinity to Heaven be discerned from a brat of Hell and darkness. Therefore Christians if you will make a judgement of your state, lay your hearts and lives to the rule, the eternal goodness, the uncreated purity and holiness, and see whether you resemble that Copy: For conformity to the image and will of God, that is, Religion, and that God will own for his, when all the counterfeits and shadows of it will fly away, and disappear for ever. I fear it may be imputed as a great piece of vanity and idle curiosity to many counterfeit speculative Christians, that they are very inquisitive, prying into the hidden rolls of Gods decree, the secrets of predestination, to find out the causes and method of their vocation and salvation; in the mean time they are not solicitous for, nor studious of the relation and resemblance that every religious soul bears unto God himself, the heaven that is opened within the godly soul it self, and the whole plot and mystery of salvation transacted upon

upon the heart of a true Christian. There is a vanity which I have observed in many pretenders to *Nobility* and *Learning*, when men seek to demonstrate the one by their *Coat of Arms*, and the Records of their Family, and the other by a *Gown*, or a Title, or their names standing in the Register of the University, rather than by the accomplishments and behaviours of Gentlemen or Schollars. A like vanity I doubt may be observed in many pretenders to religion: some are searching Gods decretals, to find their names written in the book of life; when they should be studying to find Gods Name written upon their hearts, *holiness to the Lord* engraven upon their souls: some are busie examining themselves by notes and marks without them; when they should labour to find the marks and prints of God and his nature upon them: some have their Religion in their books and Authors, which should be the Law of God unwritten in the Tables of the heart; some glory in the bulk of their duties, and in the multitude of their pompous.

pompous performances, and religious atchievements, crying with *Jehu*, *Come see here my zeal for the Lord*; whereas it were much more excellent, if one could see their likeness to the Lord, and the Characters of Divine beauty and holiness drawn upon their hearts and lives. But we, if we would judge rightly of our religious state, must view our selves in God, who is the Fountain of all goodness and holiness, and the Rule of all perfection. Value your selves by your souls, and not by your bodies, estates, friends, or any outward accomplishments, as most men do: But that is not enough; (if men rest there, they may make an Idol of the fairest of Gods creatures, even their own souls,) therefore value your souls themselves by what they have of God in them. To study the blessed and glorious God in his Word; and to converse with him in his Works, is indeed an excellent and honourable employment; but oh what a blessed study is it to view him in the communications of himself; and the impressions of his grace upon our own souls! All the  
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thin and subtil speculations. which the most raised Philosophers have of the essence and nature of God, are a poor and low and beggarly employment and attainment, in comparison of those blessed visions of God which a godly soul hath in it self, when it finds it self partaker of a Divine Nature, and living a Divine Life. Oh labour to view God and his Divine perfections in your own souls, in those copies and transcripts of them which his holy Spirit draws upon the hearts of all godly men. This is the most excellent discovery of God that any soul is capable of; it is better and more desireable than that famous discovery that was made to *Moses* in the cleft of the rock, *Exod. 34.* Nay, I should much rather desire to see the reall impression of a God-like nature upon my own soul, to see the Crucifying of my own pride and self-will, the mortifying of the meer sensual life, and a Divine life springing up in my soul instead of it, I would much rather desire to see my soul glorified in the image and beauty of God put upon it, which is indeed a pledge, yea

yea and a part of Eternal glory, than to have a vision from the Almighty, or hear a voice witnessing from Heaven, and saying, *Thou art my beloved Son, in whom my soul is well pleased.* This that I am speaking of is a true foundation of Heaven it self in the soul, a reall beginning of Happiness: For Happiness, Heaven it self is nothing else but a perfect conformity, a cheerfull and eternal compliance of all the powers of the Soul with the will of God: so that as far as a godly soul is thus conformed to God, and filled with his fulness, so far is he glorified upon earth. — *Sed heu quantum distamus ab illo !*

2. Let wisdom then be justified of her Children; let the children of God, those that are his genuine off-spring, rise up and call him blessed, in imitation of their Lord and Saviour, that eldest Son of God, that first born amongst many brethren, who rejoiced in spirit, and said, *I thank thee Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth that thou hast revealed these things,* Luk. 10. 21. or according to the style of the Apo-  
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file Peter, 1 Pet. 1. 3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again!* There is no greater contradiction in the world; than a man pretending Religion, and yet ascribing it to himself; whereas pure Religion is purely of a Divine Original: Besides, Religion doth principally consist in the subduing of self-will, in conformity to, and compliance with the divine will, in serving the interest of Gods glory in the world. Then, and not till then, may a soul be truly called Religious, when God becomes greatest of all to it and in it, and the interest of God is so powerfully planted in it, that no other interest, no self-interest, no creature-love, no particular private end, can grow by it, no more than the *Magicians* could stand before *Moses*, when he came in the power of God to work wonders. So that what *Solomon* saith of self-seeking, Prov. 25. 27. *For men to seek their own glory is not glory;* the like I may safely say, upon that double ground that I have laid down, *self-Religion is not Religion.*



on. How vainly and madly do men dream of their *self-religion*, carrying them to Heaven; when Heaven it self is nothing else but the perfection of *self-denial*, and Gods becoming all things to the Saints, 1 Cor. 15. 28. Instead of advancing men towards Heaven, there is nothing in the world that doth more directly make war against Heaven, than that *γρηγορῶνς ψυχῇ* (as *Siracides* calls it) that proud and petulant spirit of self-will that rules in the children of disobedience. So that when the Holy-Ghost would describe *David* one of the best men, to the best advantage, he describes him with opposition to self, and self-will, 1 Sam. 13. 14. — a man after Gods own heart; and again, Acts 13. 36. — he served the will of God in his generation.

There have been of old a great number of Philosophical men, who being raised up above the speculation of their own souls, (which is the *logical* life,) unto a contemplation of a Deity; and being purged by a lower kind of vertue and moral goodness, from

from the pollutions that are in this world through lust, did yet ultimately settle into themselves, and their own self-love. They were full indeed, but it was not with the *fulness of God* as the Apostle speaks, but with a *self-sufficiency*; the leaven of self-love lying at the bottom, did make them swell with pride and self-conceit. Now these men, though they were free from gross external enormities, yet did not attain to a true knowledge of God, nor any true Religion, because they did set up themselves to be their own Idols, and carry such an Image of themselves continually before their eyes, that they had no clear and spiritual discerning of God. They did, as it is storied of one of the *Persian Kings*, enshrine themselves in a Temple of their own. But what speak I of Heathen Philosophers? Is there not the same unclean spirit of *self-adoration* to be found amongst many Christians, yea and Teachers of Christianity too? witness that whole brood, those men, who whilst they hang the *grace of God* upon mans free-will, do  
utterly

utterly rob him of his glory. Some of these have impudently given a short but unfavoury answer to the Apostles question in 1 Cor. 4. 7. Who maketh you to differ from another? *Ego meipsum discerno*, I make my self to differ. These men whilst they pretend to high attainments, do discover a low and most ignoble spirit: To fasten and feed upon any thing in the Creature, is the part of a low and degenerate spirit; on the other hand it is the greatest perfection of the Creature, not to be its own, not to be any thing in it self, or any way distinct from the blessed God, the father and fountain of light and grace. Holy Paul is all along in a different strain, as in 1 Cor. 15. 10. *I, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.* I told you before what a fair and honourable character the Holy Ghost hath given of holy David, a man after Gods own heart: now you may also find a description of these men too in Scripture, not much differing from the other in phrase, but very much in sense; it is the same that is

given

*of the Divine Nature.*

given of the proud Prince of Tyrus,  
Ezek. 28. 2. They set their heart as the  
heart of God. But we, if we do indeed  
partake of the Divine Nature, shall not  
dare to take any part of the Divine  
Glory, if we conform to Gods Image,  
we shall not set up our own. This self-  
glorying in the predominancy of it is  
utterly inconsistent with true Religion,  
as Fire is with Water : For Religion is  
nothing else but the shinings forth of  
God into the Soul, the reflection of a  
beauty and glory which God hath put  
upon it. Give all therefore unto God ;  
for whatsoever is kept back, is sacrile-  
giously purloyned from him : Glory we  
in the fulness of God alone, and in self-  
penury and nothingness. The whole of  
Religion is of God : Do we see and  
discern the great things of God ? It is  
by that light that God hath set up in  
us ; according to that of the Apostle,  
1 Cor. 2. 11. *The things of God knoweth no  
man but the Spirit of God :* That love  
whereby we love him, he first shed a-  
broad in our hearts : If our Souls be  
beautiful, it is with his brightness,  
the beauty and glory of essential Holi-  
ness,

*True Religion a participation*

ness, according to that of the Apostle, *Heb. 12.* ——— *Partakers of his holiness*: If we be really and truly full, we receive it of his fulness, according to that of the Apostle, *Ephes. 3. 19.* ——— *filled with all the fulness of God.* In a word, if we be in any God-like dispositions like unto him, it is by his spreading of his image in us and over us. By all which it appears to be a thing not only wicked and unwarrantable, but utterly impossible for a godly Soul to exalt himself against God, for grace to advance it self against divine glory; for grace is nothing else but a communication of divine glory; and God is then glorified, when the Soul in holy and gracious dispositions becomes like unto him. How is it possible that grace should be a shadow to obscure divine glory, when it self is nothing else, as it comes from God, but a *Beam* of glory, and as it is found in the Creature, may properly be called a *reflection* of it. To conclude then, Be ye perswaded that a man hath so much of God, as he hath of Humility, and Self-denial, and Self-nothingness, and no more; He is so far

far of God, as he loves Him, honours Him, imitates Him, and lives to Him, and no further.

3. By this discovery of the Original of Religion, we come to understand the Original of Sin and Wickedness. And here, according to the method wherein I spoke of the Original of Religion, I might shew you how the original of sin *from without*, is of the Devil, that first usher'd it into the World, and ceaseth not to tempt men to it continually; as also of men, who are his instruments, and that it does in a sense spring from many occasions without. But these things are more improperly said to be the causes of Sin. The inward cause is the corrupt heart of man, that unclean spirit, that devilish nature, which is indeed the worst and most pernicious Devil in the world to Man. It is an o'd saying, *Homo homini Dæmon*; One Man is a Devil to another: which though it be in some sense true; yet it is more proper to say, *Homo sibi Dæmon*; Man is a Devil to himself; taking the spirit and principle of Apostacy, that rebellious

lions nature for the Devil, which indeed doth best deserve that name. But yet if we enquire more strictly into the original and nature of this Monster, we shall best know what to say of it, and how to describe it, by what we have heard of Religion. Sin then, to speak properly, is nothing else but a degeneration from a holy state, an apostacy from a holy God. Religion is a participation of God, and sin is a stragling off from him. Therefore it is wont to be defined by Negatives, a departure from God, a forsaking of him, a living in the World without him, &c. The Souls falling off from God, does describe the general nature of Sin; but then as it links into it self, or settles upon the World, and fastens upon the Creature, or any thing therein; so it becomes specified, and is called Pride, Covetousness, Ambition, and by many other names. All Souls are the Offspring of God, were originally formed into his image and likeness, and when they express the purity and holiness of the Divine Nature, in being perfect as God is perfect, then are they called the Chil-



Children of God : But those impure Spirits that do lapse and slide from God, may be said μεταβαίνειν εἰς ἄλλο γένος, to implant themselves into another stock by their own low and earthly lives, and are no more owned for the Children of God, but are of their father the Devil, *John* 10. 44. By which you may understand the low and base original of Sin : Nothing can be so vile as that which, to speak properly, is nothing else but a perfect falling off from glory it self. By this you may also (by the way ) take notice of the miserable condition of unholy Souls. We need not call for Fire and Brimstone to paint out the wretched state of sinful Souls. Sin it self is Hell and Death, and Misery to the Soul, as being a departure from Goodness and Holiness it self; I mean from God, in conjunction with whom the Happiness, and Blessedness, and Heaven of a Soul doth consist. Avoid it therefore as you would avoid being miserable.

CHAP. II.

True Religion described, as to the nature of it, by *Water*; a Metaphor usual in the Scriptures: First, by reason of the cleansing vertue of it. The defiling nature of Sin, and the beauty of Holiness manifested. Secondly, by reason of the quenching vertue of it. This briefly touch'd upon, and the more full handling of it referred to its proper place. The nature of Religion described by a *Well of Water*: That it is a Principle in the Souls of Men, proved by much Scripture. An Examination of Religion by this test; by which Examination are excluded all things that are meerly external; external Reformati<sup>o</sup>ns and Performances instanced in. A godly man bath neither the whole of his business, nor his motives lying without him. In the same Examination many things internal found not to be Religion: It is no sudden passion of the Minde; no, not though the same amount to an extaste;  
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nor any thing begotten and maintained by Fancy, and the meer power of Imagination.

**I** Come now to speak of the Nature of True Religion, which is here described by our blessed Lord, by a well of Water: First, by Water, secondly, by a Well of Water. I shall speak something of both these, but more briefly of the former.

1. Pure Religion, or Gospel-Grace, is described by Water. This is a comparison very familiar in holy Scriptures, both of the Old Testament, and the New. By this similitude Gospel-Grace was typified in the Ceremonial Law, wherein both Persons and Things ceremonially unclean, were commanded to be wash'd in Water, as is abundantly to be seen in that administration. Under this notion the same Grace is pray'd for by the Psalmist, when he had defiled himself in the Bed of a Stranger, Psal. 51. 7. *Wash me, and I shall be whiter than Snow*: He had drunk Water out of a strange Cistern, (as his Son Solomon describes that unclean act, Pro.

5. 15.) and now he calls out for Water from the Fountain of Grace to unde-file him : He now cries out for Water from the Fountain of Grace, the blessed *Messiah*, that sprung up into the World at *Bethlehem*, and that with more earnestness than formerly, we read that he wish'd for the Water of the Well of *Bethlehem*, which is by the gate, 2 *Sam.* 23. In the same phrase the same grace is promised by the Ministry of the *Prophets*, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto us. Thus we read of the fair and flourishing state of the Church, *Isa.* 58. 11. Thou shalt be like a *watered Garden*, and like a *spring of Water*, whose Waters fail not ; and of the fruitful state of the Gospel-*Prose-lytes*, *Joel* 3. 18. All the Rivers of *Ju-dah* shall flow with Waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the House of the Lord, and shall water the Valley of *Shit-tim*. Which promises that they are understood of the grace of Sanctification, the Prophet *Ezekiel* sheweth plainly, *Ezek.* 36. 25. I will sprinkle clean Water upon you, and ye shall be clean ; from all your filthiness, and from all your  
Idols

Idols will I cleanse you: for ordinary elementary Water cannot cleanse men from Idols. The Prophet *Isaiah* also puts it out of doubt, whose Prophecy, together with the interpretation of it, we find both in one verse, *Isa. 44. 3.* I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy Seed, and my Blessing upon thine Off-spring. By the same Ceremony the Gospel-Dispensation shadows out the same Mystery, in the Sacrament of Baptism; and by the same phrase, our Saviour offers and promises the same Grace, *Job. 7. 37.* If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink: and his Apostles after him, who in allusion to Water, call this Grace the washing of Regeneration, *Tit. 3. 5.* To which I might add *1 Pet. 3. 21.* and many other Texts, if it needed.

Now as the grace of God is compared to Fire, because of its refining nature, and consuming the dross and refuse of Lust in the Soul; and to other things for other reasons; so is it compared to Water, especially for those two properties, *viz. Cleansing and*

quenching. For observe this by the way, that it is a very injurious thing to the holy Ghost, to press the Metaphors which he useth in Scripture, further than they do naturally and freely serve. Neither are we to stick in the letter of the *Metaphor*, but to attend unto the scope of it. If we tenaciously adhere to the phrase, wanton wits will be ready to quarrel with absurdities, and so unawares run into strange blasphemies: They will cry out presently, How can Fire wash, when they read that of the Prophet, *Isa. 4. 4. The Lord will wash away the filth of the Daughter of Sion, by the Spirit of Burning?* But who art thou, O man, that wilt teach him to speak, who formed the Tongue? The Spirit of God intends the virtue and property of things when he names them, and that we must mainly attend to.

First therefore, by the phrase *Water*, is the *Cleansing* nature of Religion commended to us: It is the undefiling of the Soul, which Sin and Wickedness hath polluted: Sin is oft described in Scripture by *filthiness*, *loathsomeness*, *abomi-*

abomination, uncleanness, a spot, a blemish, a stain, a pollution; which indeed is a most proper description of it. The spots of Leprosie, and the scurf of the foulest scurvy are beauty-spots in comparison of it: Job upon the Dunghill, furnished cap-a-pe with scabs and boils, was not half so loathsome as goodly Absalom, in whose Body there was no blemish from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head; but his Soul was stained with the sanguine spots of malice and revenge, and fettered with the loathsome Carbuncle and Tumour of Ambition. Lazarus lying at the gates full of raw and running sores, was a far more lovely object in the pure Eyes of God, than dame Jezebel looking out at the window, adorned with spots and paints. If the best of a godly man that he hath of his own, even his Righteousness, be as a filthy rag, Isa. 64. 6. Whence shall we borrow a phrase foul enough to describe the worst of a wicked man, even his wickedness? I need say no more of it, I can say no worse of it, than to tell you it is something contrary to God, who is the eternal Fa-



*Christian Religion a Principle*

ther of Light, who is Beauty, and Brightness, and Glory it self; or to give it you in the Apostles phrase, *Rom. 3. 23.* a falling short of the glory of God. Which hath made me many times to wonder, and almost ready to cry out with the Prophet, *Be astonish'd, O ye Heavens at this*, when I have seen poor, ignorant, wicked, and prophane Wretches, passing by a person or a family visited with some loathsome Disease, in a mixture of fear and disdain, stopping their Noses, and hastning away; when their own Souls have been more vile than the dung upon the Earth, spotted with Ignorance and Atheism, swollen with the risings of Pride and Self-will, and contempt of God and his holy Image. This might well be a matter of wonder to any man, till he consider with himself, that one part of these mens uncleanness, is that very blindness which keeps them from discerning it: I speak principally of the defilement of the Soul; though indeed the same do pollute the whole Conversation: Every action springing from such an unclean Heart, thereby becomes

comes filthy; even as *Moses* his hand, put into his bosome became leprous; *Exod. 4.* or rather as one that is unclean by a dead body, defileth all that he toucheth; *Hag. 2. 13.*

Now Religion is the cleansing of this unclean spirit and conversation; so that though the Soul were formerly as filthy and odious as *Agen* his Stable; when once these living Waters flow into it, and therow it from the pure Fountain of Grace and Holiness, the Spirit of our God, one may say of it as the Apostle of his *Corinthians*, *1 Cor. 6. 11.* Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, &c. The Soul that before was white as leprosy, is now white as *Wool*, *Isa. 1. 18.* the Soul that before was like *Moses* his hand, leprous as snow, is now like *David's* Heart, white as snow, yea, and whiter too, *Psal. 51. 7.* Oh what a beauty and glory is upon that godly Soul that shines with the image and brightness of God upon it! *Solomon* in all his glory was not beautiful like such a Soul; nay, I dare say, the splendor of the Sun in its greatest strength and altitude, is a

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miserable glimmering, if it be compared with the *Day-Star of Religion*, that even in this Life arises in the heart, or if you will in the Prophets stile, the *Sun of Righteousness*, which ariseth with healing in his wings, upon them that fear the Name of God. To speak without a *Metaphor*, the godly Soul having entertained into its self the pure effluxes of Divine Light and Love, breathes after nothing more than to see more familiarly, and love more ardently, its *inclinations* are pure and holy, its *motions* spiritual and powerful, its *delights* high and heavenly; it may be said to rest in its love, and yet it may be said, that love will not suffer it to rest, but is still carrying it out into a more intimate union with its beloved object. What is said of the *Oyntment of Christs Name*, *Cant. 1. 3.* is true of the *Water of his Spirit*, it is poured forth, therefore do the Virgins love him: Religion begets a chaste and virgin-love in the Soul towards that blessed God that begot it, it bathes it self in the Fountain that produc'd it, and suns it self perpetually in the warm beams

beans that first hatch'd it. Religion issues from God himself; and is ever issuing out towards God alone, passionately breathing with the holy Psalmist, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? In Earth there is none that I desire beside thee!* The Soul that formerly may be said to have lain among the Pots, by reason of its filthiness, is now as the wings of a Dove covered with silver, and her Feathers with yellow gold: the Soul that formerly may be said to have sitten down by the flesh pots of Egypt, in regard of its sensual and earthly Loves, being redeemed by the almighty grace of God, is upon its way to the holy Land, hastning to a Countrey, not earthly but heavenly, *Heb. 11.* This pure Principle being put into the Soul, puts it upon holy Studies, indites holy Meditations, directs it to high and noble ends, and makes all its embraces to be pure and chaste, labouring to compass God himself, which before were adulterous and idolatrous, free for sin, and self, and the World, to lodge and lie down in. In a word, this Offspring of Heaven, this Kings Daughter,

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ter, the godly Soul, is all glorious within, yea, and outwardly too, she is clothed with wrought gold, *Psal. 45. 13.* Her faith within, is more precious than gold, *1 Pet. 1. 7.* and her Conversation curiously made up of an Embroidery of good Works, some of Piety, some of Charity, some of Sobriety, but all of Purity, shineth with more noble and excellent splendor, than the high Priests Garments and Breast plate spangled with such variety of precious Stones. This precious Ointment, this holy *Unction*, as the Apostle calls it, *1 Job. 2. 20.* is as diffusive of it self and ten thousand times more fragrant than that of *Aaron* so much commended in *Psal. 133.* that ran down from his head upon his beard, and from thence upon the skirts of his garment. *Not my feet only, but my hands and my head, Lord;* said *Peter, John 13.* Not well knowing what he said; but the soul that is truly sensible of the excellent purity which is caused by Divine Washings, longs to have the whole man, the whole Life also made partaker of it, and cries, *Lord not my head only, not my heart only,*  
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but my hands and my feet also, make me wholly pure as God is pure. In a word then, true Religion is the cleansing of the Soul, and all the powers of it, so that whereas Murderers sometimes lodged in it, now Righteousness; the *Den of Thieves*, thievish Lusts and Loves, and Interests, and Ends, which formerly stole away the Soul from God its right Owner, is now become a *Temple* fit for the great King to dwell, and live, and reign in: And the whole Conversation is turned from its wonted vanity, worldliness, and iniquity, and is continually employed about things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, *Phil. 4. 8.*

2. By the phrase *Water*, the *Quenching* nature of Religion is commended to us. God hath indued the immortal Soul with a restless appetite and raging thirst after some chief Good, which the heart of every man is continually groping after, and catching at, though indeed few find it, because they seek it where it is not to be found. If we speak properly; it is not gold, or silver, or popular applause, which the covetous.

tous or ambitious mind doth ultimately aim at, but some chief good, happiness, sufficiency, and satisfaction in these things: wherein they are more guilty of Blasphemy than Atheism: for it is clear that they do not deny a supreme Good, (for that which men do chiefly and ultimately aim at, is their God, be it what it will) but they do verily blaspheme the true God, when they place their happiness there where it is not to be found, and attribute that fulness and sufficiency to something else besides the living God. Sin hath not destroyed the nature and capacity of the rational Soul, but hath diverted the mind from its adequate object, and hath sunk it into the Creature, where it wanders hither and thither, like a banished man, from one Den and Cave to another, but is secure no where. A wicked man, who is loosed from his centre by sin, and departed from the Fountain of his Life, flies low in his affections, and flutters perpetually about the Earth, and earthly Objects, but can find no more rest for the foot of his Soul, than *Noah's Dove* could find for the

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the sole of her foot. Now Religion is the hand that pulls this wandering Bird into her own Ark from whence she was departed; it settles the Soul upon its proper centre, and quenches its burning thirst after happiness. And for this reason it is called Water in Scripture, as appears from *Isa. 58. 11. The Lord shall satisfy thy Soul in drought;* and of *Isa. 45. 3. I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground;* compared with *John 7. 37. Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.* Religion is a taste of infinite Goodness which quenches the Souls thirst after all other created and finite Good; even as that taste which honest Nathaniel had of Christs Divinity, took him off from the expectation of any Messiah to come, and made him cry out presently, *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel, John 1. 49.* And every religious Soul hath such a taste of God even in this life, which though it do not perfectly fill him, yet doth perfectly assure him where all fulness dwells. But of this I shall have occasion

sion to discourse more largely, when I come to treat of the *consequent* of true Religion.

I proceed therefore to the second phrase whereby our Saviour describes the nature of true Religion, It is a *Well*, a Fountain in the Soul, — *Shall be in him a Well of Water*. From which phrase, to wave niceties, I shall only observe,

That Religion is a Principle in the Souls of men.

The Water that Christ pours into the Soul, is not like the Water that he pours upon our Streets, that washes them, and runs away; but it becomes a cleansing Principle within the Soul itself; every drop from God becomes a Fountain in man. Not as if man had a kind of *αυτοζωον* in himself, or were the first spring of his own motions towards God: I find not any Will in the natural man so divinely free. God hath indeed given this to his natural Son, his only begotten Son, to have *life in himself*, Joh. 5. 26. but not to any of his adopted ones. If you ask me concerning man in his natural capacity, I am so far from thinking that he hath a self-quickning

quickning power, a principle of life in himself, that I must needs assert the contrary with the Apostle, That he is *dead in trespasses and sins*. Ephes. 2. 1. so far from thinking that he hath in himself a Well of Water, that I must call him, with the Prophet, *Isa. 44. thirsty and dry ground*. As for the Regenerate man, I will not enter into that deep controversie concerning the co-operation of mans Will with the Spirit of God, and its subordination to that in all gracious acts, or what a kind of cause of them this renewed will of man may be safely called; only I will affirm, That Repenting and Believing, are properly mans acts, and yet they are performed by Gods power; first Christ must give this Water, ere it can be a Well of Water in the Soul: Which is enough, I suppose, to clear me from siding with either of those parties, whether those that ascribe to God that which he cannot do, or those that ascribe to Free-will that which God alone can do. But I fear nothing from these Controversies, for that way wherein I shall discourse of this matter,

ter, will nothing at all border upon them. This then, I affirm, That Religion is a living Principle in the Souls of good men: I cannot better describe the nature of Religion, than to say it is a *Nature*; for so does the Apostle speak, or at least allows us to speak, when he calls it a participation of a divine Nature, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. nothing but a Nature can partake of a Nature; a mans Friend may partake of his Goodness and Kindness, but his Child only partakes of his Nature: He that begets, begets a Nature, and so doth he that begets again. The Sun enlightens the World outwardly, but it does not give a Sun-like nature to the things so enlightened, and the Rain doth moisten the Earth, and refresh it inwardly, but it does not beget the nature of Water in the Earth: But this Water that I give (says our Saviour) becometh a Well of Water in the Soul. Religion is not any thing without a Man, hanging upon him, or annext to him; neither is it every something that is in a man, (as we shall see anon) but it is a Divine Principle informing and actuating

inquating the Souls of good Men, a living and lively Principle, a free and flowing Principle, a strong and lasting Principle, an inward and spiritual Principle. I must not speak of all these distinctly in this place, for fear of interfering in my discourse: When I say Religion is a Principle, a vital Form acting the Soul and all the powers of it, an inward nature, &c. Saith not the Scripture the same here, a Well or Fountain of Water? And elsewhere, a *new man, the hidden man of the heart, the inward man*, Ephes. 4. 24. 1 Pet. 3. 4. As the Soul is called an inward man, respectve to the Body, 2 Cor. 4. 16. so Religion is called an inward man, respectve to the Soul it self, Rom. 7. 22. It is a man within man. The man that is truly alive to God, hath in him not only inward parts, for so a dead man hath, but an inward man, an inward Nature and Principle. Again, It is called a *Root*, Job 19. 28. or if not there, yet plainly in Mark 4. 17. Where temporary Professors are said to have no root in themselves. And this is by the same propriety of speech, whereby a wicked

wicked principle is called, *A Root of bitterness*, Heb. 12. 15. Again, it is called a *Seed*, the *Seed of God*, 1 Joh. 3. 9. where this Seed of God is called an abiding or remaining principle. In the first Creation God made the Trees of the earth, having their seed in themselves, Gen. 1. 11. and in the New Creation, these trees of Righteousness, of Gods planting, are also made with seed in themselves, though not of themselves: It is said to be the Seed of God indeed, but remaining in the godly Soul. Again, it is called a *Treasure*, in opposition to an Alms or Annuity, that lasteth but for a day or an year, as a *Well of Water*, in opposition to a *Dish of Water*; and a *Treasure of the heart*, in opposition to all outward and earthly treasures, Matth. 12. 35. It is a treasure affording continual expences, not exhausted, yea encreased by expences; wherein it exceeds all treasures in the World. By the same propriety of Speech, Sin is called a treasure too, but it is an *evil treasure*, as our Saviour speaks in that same place. Do you not see what a stock of wickedness finfull men

men have within themselves, which although they have spent upon ever since they were born, yet it is not impaired, nay, it is much augmented thereby: And shall not the second *Adam* bestow something as certain and permanent upon his Off-spring, as the first *Adam* conveyed to his Posterity? Though men have something without them to guide them in the way of life, yet it is some living principle within them, that does denominate them living Men. The Scripture will abundantly inform you which is the true *Circumcision*, Col. 2. 11. the true *Sacrifice* to God, *Psal.* 51. 17. And indeed the Law it self is not so much to be considered as it was engraven in Tables of Stone, as being written in the heart, *Jer.* 31. 33. The *Jews* need not have taken up their rest in the Law, considered as an outward Rule or Precept; for they knew, or might have known, that God requireth *truth in the inward parts* as one of themselves, a Prophet and King of their own acknowledgeth, *Psal.* 51. 6. But I doubt many Christians are also sick of the same Disease, whilst they



they view the Gospel as an History, and an external dispensation ; whereas the Apostle , when he opposeth it to the Law, seems altogether to make it an internal thing, a vital form and principle seated in the minds and spirits of men, 2 Cor. 3. The Law was an external Rule or Dispensation, that could not give Life, though it shewed the way to it, Gal. 3. 21. but the Gospel in the most proper notion of it, seems to be an internal impression from God, a living Principle whereby the Soul is enabled to express a real conformity to God himself. If we consider the Gospel in the History of it, and as a piece of Book-Learning , it is as weak and impotent a thing as the Law was, and men may be as overly and formal in the profession of this, as they were of that, which we see by daily sad experience. But if we consider the Gospel, as an efflux of Life and Power from God himself upon the Soul , producing Life where-ever it comes, then we have a clear distinction between the Law and the Gospel ; to which the Apostle seems to referr, when he calls the *Corinthians*

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thians the Epistle of Christ, not written with ink, nor in Tables of Stone, but with the Spirit of the living God, in fleshly Tables of the Heart, 2 Cor. 3. 3. According to which notion of the Law and Gospel, I think we may (with a learned man of our own) come to a good understanding of that tormented Text, Jer. 30. 31. quoted by the Apostle, Heb. 10. 8. *This is the Covenant that I will make, I will put my Law into their minds, &c.* The Gospel doth not so much consist in *verbis*, as in *virtute*, a Divine Principle of Religion in the Soul, is the best Gospel: And so *Abraham*, and *Moses* under the Law, were truly *Gospellers*; and on the other hand, All carnal Christians that converse with the Gospel only as a thing without them, are as truly *legal*, and as far short of the Righteousness of God, as ever any of the Jews were.

Thus we see that Religion is a Principle in the Souls of good Men.

— *Shall be in him a Well of Water.*

We shall here now take notice of the  
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difference between the true, and all counterfeit Religions. Religion is that pearl of great price, which few men are possessed of, though all men pretend to it, *Laodicean*-like, saying, they are rich, and need nothing, when indeed they are poor and have nothing. This then shall be the test by which at present we will a little try the counterfeit pearls. True Religion is an inward Nature, an inward and abiding Principle in the minds of good men, a *well of water*.

1. Then we must exclude all things that are merely external; these are not it. Religion is not something annex'd to the soul *ab extra*, but a new nature put into it. And here we shall glance at two things.

1. *A godly Soul does not find the whole of his business lying without him.* Religion does not consist in external re-formations, though never so many and specious. A false and overly Religion may serve to tie mens hands, and reduce their outward actions to a fair seemliness in the eyes of men: but true Religion's main dominion and power

power is over the soul, and its business lies mostly in reforming and purging the heart, with all the affections and motions thereof. It is not a battering Ram coming from without, and serving to beat down the *out-works* of open and visible enormities of life; but enters with a secret and sweet power into the soul it self, and reduces it from its rebellious temper, and perswades it willingly to surrender it self, and all that is in it. Sin may be beaten out of the outward conversation, and yet retire and hide it self in the secret places of the soul, and there bear rule as perfectly by wicked loves and lusts, as ever it did by prophane and notorious practices. A man's hands may be tyed by some external cords cast upon them, from visible revenge, and yet murders may lodge in the temple of his heart, as murderers lodged in the Temple of old: mens tongues may be tyed up from the foul sin of giving fair words concerning themselves, very shame may chastize them out of proud boastings, and self-exaltings; when in the

mean time they swell in self-conceit, and are not afraid to bear an unchaste and sinfull love towards their own perfections, and adore an Image of self set up in their hearts. What a fair *out-side* the *Pharisee* had, himself will best describe, (for indeed it is one of his Properties to describe himself) *Luke 18. 11. God, I thank thee that I am not, &c.* but if you will have a draught of his *inside*, you may best take it from our Saviour, *Math. 23.* Neither doth Religion consist in external *performances*, though never so many, and seemingly spiritual. Many professors of Christianity, I doubt, sink all their Religion into a constant course of duties, and a model of performances, being more strangers to the life, and strength, and sweetness of true Religion. Those things are needfull and usefull, and helpfull, yea, and honourable, because they have a relation and some tendency to God; but they are apt to become snares and idols to superstitious minds, who conceit, that God is some way gratified by these, and so they take up their  
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rest in them. That Religion, that only varnishes and beautifies the outside, tunes the Tongue to Prayer and Conference, instructs and extends the Hands to Diligence and Almesdeeds, that awes the Conversation into some external Righteousness or Devotion, is here excluded, as also by the Apostle, 1 Cor. 13. Much less can that pass for Religion, that spends it self about Forms, and Opinions, and Parties, and many disputable points, which we have seen so much of in our own Generation. The Religion that runs upon modes, and turns upon interests, as a door turns upon its hinges, is a poor narrow scant thing, and may easily view it self at once, all together from first to last. Men may be as far from the Kingdom of Heaven in their more spiritual Forms, and Orthodox Opinions, as they were in their more carnal and erroneous, if they take up their rest in them: Neither is it the pursuing of any interest that will denominate them religious, but the grand interest of their Souls.

2. *A godly Soul in his more inward*

and spiritual acts, bath not his motive without him: For a man may be somewhat more inward in his motions, and yet as outward in his motives as the former. Religious acts, and gracious motions are not originally and primarily caused by some weights hung upon the Soul either by God or men, neither by the worldly Blessings which God gives, nor the heavy afflictions which he sends. The Wings by which the godly Soul flies out towards God, are not waxt to him, as the Poets feign *Icarus's* to have been; but they grow out of himself, as the wings of an Eagle that flies swiftly towards Heaven: On the other side, a Soul may be *prest down* unto humiliation under the heavy weight of Gods Judgements, that has no mind to *stoop*, no self-denying or self-debasing disposition in it. Thus you may see *Jehu* flying upon the Wings of Ambition and Revenge, born up by successes in his Government; and his Predecessor *Ahab* bowing down mournfully under an heavy Sentence. The Laws, and Penalties, and Encouragements, and Observations of men,



men, do sometimes put a weight upon the Soul too, but they beget a more sluggish, uneven, and unkindly motion in it. You may expect that under this head I should speak something of *Heaven and Hell*; and truly so I may very pertinently, for I think they do belong to this place. If you take *Heaven* properly, for a full and glorious union to God, and fruition of him, and *Hell* for an eternal separation and stragling from the Divinity, and suppose that the love of God, and the fear of living without him, be well drunk into the Soul, then verily these are pure and religious Principles: But if we view them as things meerly without us, and reserved for us, and under those common carnal notions of *delectableness* and *dreadfulness*, they are no higher nor better motives to us, than the carnal *Jews* had in the Wilderness, when they turned their Backs upon *Egypt*, where they had been in bondage, and set their Faces towards *Canaan*, where they hoped to find *Milk and Honey*, Peace, Plenty and Liberty. A Soul is not carried to Heaven, as a Body is

carried to the Grave, upon mens Shoulders; it is not born up by Props, whether humane or divine; nor carried to God in a Chariot, as a man is carried to see his Friend: The holy fire of ardent Love wherein the Soul of *Elijah* had been long carried up towards God, was something more excellent, and indeed more desireable, than the *Fiery Chariot* by which his Body and Soul were translated together. Religion is a spring of motion which God hath put into the Soul it self.

And as all things that are external, whether actions or motives, are excluded in this Examination which we make of Religion: So neither,

2. Must we allow of every thing that is internal, to be Religion. And therefore,

1. It is not a *fit*, a *start*, a *sudden passion* of the minde, caused by the power and strength of some present Conviction in the Soul, which in a hot mood will needs make out after God in all haste. This may fitly be compared to the rash and rude motion of the Host of *Israel*, who being chidden for their slothfulness over night, rose up early  
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in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the Mountain, saying, *Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised, for we have sinned*, Numb. 14.40. And indeed it fares with these men oftentimes as it did with those, both as to the undertaking, and as to the success; their *motion* is as sinful as their *station*; and their success is answerable, they are driven back and discomfited in their enterprize. Nay, though this passion might arise so high as to be called an *extasie* or a *rapture*, yet it deserves not the name of Religion: "For Religion" is (as one speaks elegantly) like the "natural heat that is radicated in the" "hearts of living Creatures, which hath" "the dominion of the whole body, and" "sends forth warm Blood and Spirits," "and vital nourishment into every part" "and Member, it regulates and orders" "the motions of it in a due and even" "manner. But these extatical Souls, though they may blaze like a Comet, and swell like a torrent or land-flood for a time, and shoot forth fresh and high for a little season, are soon extin-

guished, emptied, and dried up, because they have not a Principle, a stock to spend upon, or as our Saviour speaks, *no root* in themselves. These mens motions and actions bear no more proportion to Religion, than a Land-flood that swells high, and runs swiftly, but it is only during the rain; or in the Scripture-phrafe, no more than a *morning-dew* that soon passes away, (*Hos. 6.4.*) is like a Well or Fountain of Water.

2. If Religion be a Principle, a new Nature in the Soul, then it is not a meer *Mechanisme*, a *piece of Art*. Art imitates Nature; nothing more ordinary (I doubt) than for Religion it self, that new Nature, to go into an Art. I need not tell you how all the external acts and shootings forth of Religion, may be dissembled and imitated by Art, and be acted over by a mimical apish Pharisee, who finds nothing at all of the gentle and mighty heat, nor the divine and noble life of it in his own Soul, whereby he may fairly deceive the credulous World, as I have partly hinted already. But it is possible (I wish it be not common) for men that

that are somewhat more convinced, enlightened, and affected, to imitate the very power and spirit of Religion, and to deceive themselves too, as if they possess some true living Principle; and herein they exceed the most exquisite Painters. Now this may be done by the power of a quick and raised Fancy; men hearing such glorious things spoken of Heaven, the City of the great King, the New *Jerusalem*, may be carried out by the power of self-Love, to wish themselves there, being mightily taken with a conceit of the place. But how shall they come at it? Why they have seen in Books, and heard in discourses, of certain signs of Grace, and evidences of Salvation; and now they set their fancies on work, to find or make some such things in themselves. Fancy is well acquainted with the several Affections of Love, Fear, Joy, Grief, which are in the Soul, and having a great command over the animal Spirits, it can send them forth to raise up these Affections, even almost when it listeth; and when it hath raised them, it is but putting to some thoughts of God

God and Heaven, and then these look like a handsome platform of true Religion drawn in the Soul; which they presently view, and fall in love with, and think they do even taste of the powers of the world to come, when indeed it is nothing but a self-fulness and sufficiency that they feed upon. Now you may know this artificial Religion by this; These men can vary it, alter it, enlarge it, straiten it, and new mold it at pleasure, according to what they see in others, or according to what themselves like best; one while acting over the *Joy and Confidence* of some Christians, anon the *Humiliation and Brokenness* of others. But this fanciful Religion, proceeding indeed from nothing but low and carnal conceits of God and Heaven, is of a flitting and vanishing nature. But true Christians are gently, yet powerfully moved by the natural force of true Goodness, and the beauty of God, and do move on steadily and constantly in their way to him, and pursuit of him. The Spirit of Regeneration in good men, spreads it self upon the understanding, and

and sweetly derives it self through the will and affections, which makes true Religion to be a consistent and thriving Principle in the Soul, as not being acted upon the stage of Imagination, but upon the highest powers of the Soul it self: and may be discerned by the *evenness* of its motions, and the *immortality* of its nature: for a good man though indeed he cannot go on alwayes with like speed and cheerfulness in his way, yet is not willing at any time to be quite out of it.

By this same nature of true Religion, you may examine all those spurious and counterfeit Religions, that spring from a *natural belief of a Deity*, from *convictions*, *observations*, *fleshy* and *low apprehensions of Heaven*, *book-learning*, and the *precepts of men*, as the Prophet calls them, and the rest, which are seated in the Fancy, and swim in the brain; whose effect is but to gild the outward man, or at best, but to move the Soul by an external force, in an unnatural, inconsistent and transient manner. In a word, All these pretenders to Religion may



may seem to have *water*, but they have no *well*; as there are others, deep men, principled indeed with learning, policy, ingenuity, &c. but not with true goodness, whom the Apostle calls *Wells*, but *without water*, 2 Pet. 2. 7. But the truly godly, and God-like soul hath in it self a principle of pure Religion ——— The *water* that I shall give him, shall be a well of water, springing up into Eternal Life.

### CHAP. III.

Containing the first property mentioned of true Religion, viz. The Freedom and unconstrainedness of it: This discovered in several outward Acts of Morality and Worship; as also in the more inward Acts of the Soul. This Freedom considered as to its Author; in which is considered how far the command of God may be said to act a godly soul: Secondly, considered as to its object. Two cautionary concessions; First, that some things without

without the soul may be said to be motives; how far afflictions and temporal prosperity may be said to be so. Secondly, That there is a constraint lying upon the godly soul; which yet takes not away its freedom. An enquiry into forc'd Devotion, and first into the causes of it, viz. Men themselves, and that upon a threefold account, other men, or the Providences of God: Secondly, into the properties of it, proving that it is for the most part dry and spiritless, needy and penurious, uneven, and not permanent.

**I** Proceed now from the nature of Religion, to speak of the properties of it, as many of them as are couched under this phrase ἀλλομένη εἰς ζώνν αἰώνιον, springing up into everlasting life. Not to squeeze the phrase any further than it will naturally afford discourse, I shall only take notice of these three properties of true Religion, contained in the word [springing up] viz. the Freedom, Activity, and permanency or perseverance of it.

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The first property of it coucht under this phrase is, that it is *Free* and *unconstrained*. Religion is a principle, and it flows and acts freely in the Soul, after the manner of a fountain, and in the day of its mighty power makes the people a *willing* people, *Psal.* 110. 3. and the soul in whom it is truly leated, to become a *free-will offering* unto God. *Alexander* the great subdued the World with force of arms, and made men rather his tributaries and *servants*, than his lovers and *friends*: But the great God the King of Souls obtains an amicable conquest over the hearts of his elect, and overpowers them in such a manner, that they love to be his servants, and do willingly and readily obey him, without dissimulation or constraint, without mercenariness or morosity: In which they are unlike to the subjects of the Kingdoms of this world, who are kept in their duties by fear and force, not from a pure kindness and benevolence of mind, to whom τὸ παρὸν αἰὼν βαρὺ, the present yoke is alwayes grievous. Hence

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it is that the propagation of this people is called their *flowing* unto the Lord, Isa. 2. 2. *the mountain of the Lords house shall be established, and all Nations shall flow unto it,* and again, Jer. 31. 12. *they shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord.* And the disposition of this people is described to be a *heart*y and *willing* frame, Eph. 6. 6, 7. and elsewhere often. Now this willingness or freeness of godly Souls might be explained and confirmed by the consideration both of their outward and inward acts.

1. As to the *outward* acts of service which the true Christian doth perform, he is freely carryed out towards them without any constraint or force. If he keep himself from the evils of the place, and age, and company wherein he lives and converses, it is not by a *restraint* which is upon him meerly from without him, but by a principle of holy *temperance* planted in his soul: it is the *seed of God* abiding in him that preserves him from the commission of sin, 1 *Joh.*

3. 9. He is not kept back from sin as a horse by a bridle; but by an inward and spiritual change made in his nature. \* On the other hand, if he imploy himself in any external acts of moral or instituted duty, he do's it freely, not as of necessity or by constraint. If you speak of acts of *charity*, the godly man gives from a principle of love to God, and kindness to his Brother; and so *cheerfully*, not *grudgingly*, or of necessity, 2 Cor. 9. 7. An alms may be wrung out of a Miser, but it proceeds from the liberal soul, as a stream from its fountain: therefore he is called a *deviser of liberal things*, and one that standeth upon liberalities, as those last words of *Isa.* 32. 8. are rendred by the *Dutch translators*. If you speak of *righteousness* or *temperance*, he is not overruled by power, or compelled by Laws, but indeed acted by the power of that Law which is written and engraven upon his mind. If you speak of acts of *worship* whether *moral* or *instituted*, in all these he is also free, as to any constraint. Prayer is not his task, or a *piece of penance*, but  
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it is the natural cry of the new-born soul; neither do's he take it up as a *piece of policy*, to bribe Gods Justice, or engage mens charity, to purchase favour with God or man, or his own clamorous Conscience: but he prays, because he *wants*, and *loves* and *believes*; he wants the fuller presence of that God whom he loves, he loves the presence which he wants, he believes that he that loves him, will not suffer him to want any good thing that he prays for. And therefore he do's not bind up himself severely, and limit himself penuriously to a morning and evening Sacrifice and solemnity, as unto certain *rent-seasons* wherein to pay a homage of dry devotion; but his loving and longing Soul disdaining to be confin'd within *Canonical* hours, is frequently soaring in some heavenly raptures or other, and sallying forth in holy ejaculations: He is not content with some weak essays towards Heaven in set and formal Prayer, once or twice a day, but labours also to be all the day long sucking in those Divine influences, and streams of grace by

by the *mouth* of faith, which he begg'd in the morning by the *tongue* of prayer; which hath made me sometimes to think it a proper speech to say, the *faith of Prayer*, as well as the *prayer of faith*; for believing, and hanging upon Divine grace, doth really *drink in* what Prayer *opens its mouth* for, and is in effect a powerfull kinde of praying in silence: By believing we pray, as well as in praying we do believe. A truly godly man hath not his hands tyed up meerly by the force of a National Law, no nor yet by the authority of the fourth Commandment, to keep one in seven a day of rest; As he is not content with meer resting upon the Sabbath, ( knowing that neither working nor ceasing from work doth of it self commend a Soul to God ) but doth press after intimacy with God in the duties of his worship; so neither can he be content with one Sabbath in a week, nor think himself absolved from holy and heavenly meditations any day in the week; but labours to *make* every day a Sabbath, as to the keeping of his

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heart up unto God in a holy frame,  
and to find every day to be a Sabbath,  
as to the communications of God un-  
to his Soul: Though the necessities of  
his body will not allow him it may be  
( though indeed God hath granted this  
to some men ) to keep every day as  
a Sabbath of Rest; yet the necessities  
of his Soul do call upon him, to make  
every day as far as may be, a Sabbath  
of communion with the blessed God.  
If you speak of Fasting, he keeps not  
Fasts meerly by vertue of a civil, no  
nor a divine institution, but from a  
principle of godly sorrow afflicts his  
Soul for sin, and daily endeavours  
more and more to be emptied of him-  
self, which is the most excellent Fast-  
ing in the World. If you speak of  
Thanksgiving, he do's not give thanks  
by laws and Ordinances, but having in  
himself a law of thankfulness, and an  
ordinance of love engraven upon, and  
deeply radicated in his Soul, delights  
to live unto God, and to make his  
heart and life a living descant upon  
the goodness and love of God;  
which is the most divine way of  
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thank-offering in the World, it is the *ballelujah* which the Angels sing continually. In a word, wherever God hath a tongue to command, true godliness will find an hand to perform; whatever yoke Christ Jesus shall put upon the Soul, Religion will enable to bear it, yea and to count it easie too; the mouth of Christ hath pronounc'd it easie, *Mat. 11. 30.* and the spirit of Christ makes it easie. Let the commandment be what it will, it will not be grievous, *1 John 5. 3.* The same spirit doth in some measure dwell in every Christian which without measure dwelt in Christ, who counted it his *meat and drink* to do the will of his Father, *Job. 4. 34.*

2. And more especially, the true Christian is free from any constraint as to the *inward* acts which he performeth. Holy love to God is one principal Act of the gracious soul, whereby it is carryed out freely, and with an ardent lust towards the object that is truly and infinitely lovely and satisfactory, and to the enjoyment of it. I know indeed that this springs from

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from *self-indigency*, and is commanded by the sovereignty of the supremum good, the object that the Soul eyes : but it is properly free from any constraint. Love is an affection, that cannot be extorted as fear is ; nor forced by any external power, nor indeed internal neither : the revenues of the King of *Persia*, or the treasures of *Ægypt* cannot commit a rape upon it, *Heb. 11. 26.* neither indeed can the soul it self raise and lay this spirit at pleasure ; which made the Poet complain of himself, as if he were not sole Emperour at home,

*Non amo te Sabidi ; nec possum dicere quare, &c.*

Though the outward bodily Acts of Religion are ordinarily forced, yet this pure, chaste, virgin-affection cannot be ravished ; it seems to be a kind of a *peculiar* in the Soul, though under the *jurisdiction* of the understanding. By this property of it, it is elegantly described by the Spirit of God, *Cant. 8. 7.* — if a man would give all the

*the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned. It cannot be bought with money or money-worth, cannot be purchased with gifts or arts; and if any should offer to bribe it, it would give him a sharp and scornfull check in the language of Peter to Simon, Thy money perish with thee; Love is no hireling, no base born mercenary affection, but noble, free, and generous. Neither is it low-spirited and slavish as Fear is: therefore when it comes to full age, it will not suffer this Son of the Bondwoman to divide the Inheritance, the dominions of the Soul with it; when it comes to be perfect, it casteth out fear, sayes the Apostle, 1 Joh. 4. 18. Neither indeed is it directly under the authority of any Law, whether humane or Divine: it is not begotten by the influence of a Divine Law, as a Law, but as holy, just, and good, as we shall see more anon: — quis legem dat amantibus? ipse Est sibi lex amor; the Law of Love, or if you will, in the Apostles phrase, the spirit of love, and of power, in opposition to the spirit of fear*

fear ( 2 Tim. 1. 7. ) doth more influence the Godly man in his pursuit of God than any law without him: this is as a *wing* to the Soul, whereas outward commandments are but as *guides* in his way, or at most, but as *spurs* in his sides.

The same I may say of holy *delight* in God, which is indeed the *flower* of love, or love grown up to its full age and stature, which hath *no torment* in it, and consequently no force upon it. Like unto which are holy *confidence*, *Faith* and *Hope*, ingenuous and natural Acts of the Religious Soul, whereby it hastens into the Divine embraces, *as the Eagle hastneth to the prey*, swiftly and speedily, and not by force and constraint, *as a fool to the correction of the stocks*, or a bear to the stake. These are all genuine off-springs of holy religion in the Soul, and they are utterly incapable of force; Violence is contrary to the nature of them; for to use the Apostles words, with the change of one word, *Hope that is forc'd, is not hope.*

Now a little further to explain this  
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excellent property of true Religion, we may a little consider, the *Author* and the *object* of it.

The *author* of this noble and Free principle is God himself who hath made it a partaker of his own nature, who is the *Free agent*, himself is the fountain of his own Acts. The uncreated life and liberty, hath given this priviledge to the religious Soul, in some sense to have life and liberty in it self, and a dominion over its own Acts. I do not know that any created Being in the world hath more of divinity in it than the Soul of man, *quâ nihil homini dedit Deus ipse divinius*, as Tully speaks; nor that any thing in the Soul doth more resemble the Divine essence, than the noble *Freedom* that the soul hath in it self; which freedom is never so divine and generous, as when it is objected upon God himself. This excellent freedom is something of God in the Soul of man, and therefore may justly claim the *Free spirit* for its author, *Psalms 51. 12. 2 Cor. 3. 17.* or the Son of God for its original, according to that in *Joh. 8. 36.*

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If the Son shall make you free, then shall ye be free indeed.

But here it may be demanded, whether the command of God do not act the godly soul, and set it upon its holy motions? I confess indeed that the command of God is much eyed by a godly man, and is of great weight with him, and do's in some sense lay a constraint upon him, but yet I think not so much the *authority* of the Law, as the *reasonableness* and *goodness* of it, do's prevail principally with him. The Religious Soul do's not so much eye the Law under the notion of a command, as under the notion of *holy*, *just*, and *good* as the Apostle speaks, and so embraces it, chooses it, and longs to be perfectly conformable to it. I do not think it so proper to say that a good man loves God, and all righteousness and holiness, and religious duties by virtue of a command to do so, as by virtue of a new nature that God hath put into him, which doth instruct and prompt him so to do. A religious Soul being reconciled to the nature of God, do's



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*The Religious Soul Free, and*

embrace all his Laws by vertue of the equitableness and perfection that he sees in them; not because they are *commanded*, but because they are in themselves *to be desired*, as *David* speaks, *Psal. 19. 10.* In which Psalm the holy man gives us a full account why he did so love and esteem the laws and commandments of God, *viz.* because they are *perfect, right, pure, clean, true, sweet, and lovely*, as you will find, *v. 7, 8, 9, 10.* To love the Lord our God with all our heart, and strength, and mind, is not only a duty, by vertue of that first and great commandment that doth require it; but indeed the highest privilege, honour and happiness of the Soul. To this purpose may that profession of the Psalmists be applyed, *Psal. 119. 173. I have chosen thy precepts,* and, *ver. 30. I have chosen the way of truth.* Choosing is an act of judgement and understanding, and respects the *quality of the thing*, more than the *authority of the command.* *David* did not stumble into the way of truth accidentally by vertue of his education, or acquaintance,

tance, or the like circumstance, nor was he *whipt* or driven into it by the meer severity of a law without him; but he *chose* the way of truth, as that which was indeed most eligible, pleasant and desirable. What our blessed Saviour says concerning himself, is also true of every true Christian in his measure, he makes it his *meat and drink* to do the will of God: Now we know that men do not eat and drink, because Physicians prescribe it as a means to preserve life; but the sensual appetite is carryed out towards food, because it is good, sweet, suitable: so is the spiritual appetite carryed out towards spiritual food, not so much by the force of an external precept, as by the attractive power of that higher good which it finds suitable and sufficient for it. As for the *object* of this Free and generous spirit of Religion, it is no other than God himself principally and ultimately, and other things only as they are subservient to the enjoyment of him. God as the supreme good, able to fill and perfectly satiate

all the wants and ingrediencies of the soul, and so to make it wholly and eternally happy, is the proper object of the Soul most free and chearful motions. The Soul eyes God as the perfect and absolute good, and God in Christ as a feasible and attainable good, and so finds every way enough in this object to encourage it to pursue after him, and throw it self upon him. Religion fixes upon God, as upon its own centre, as upon its proper and adequate object; it views God as the Infinite and absolute good, and so is drawn to him without any external force. The Godly Soul is overpowred indeed, but it is only with the infinite goodness of God, which exercises its Sovereignty over all the faculties of the Soul; which overpowering is so far from straitning or pinching it, that it makes it truly free and generous in its motions. Religion wings the Soul, and makes it take a flight freely and swiftly towards God and eternal life: it is of God, and by a sympathy that it hath with him, it carryes the soul out after

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ter him, and into conjunction with him. In a word, the godly Soul being loosned from *self-love*, emptied of *self-fulness*, beaten out of all *self-satisfaction*, and delivered from all *self-confining* lusts, wills, interests and ends, and being mightily overcome with a sense of a higher and more excellent good, goes after that freely, centres upon it firmly, grasps after it continually, and had rather be that than what it self is, as seeing that the nature of that supream good is infinitely more excellent and desirable than its own.

Thus have I briefly explained and confirmed the *Freeneß* of this principle in the truly godly Soul: I would now make some little improvement of it, but that it seems needful I should here interweave a cautionary concession or two.

First, 'It must be granted, that some things without the Soul may be motives, in our common sense, and encouragements to the Soul to quicken, and hasten, and strengthen it in its religious acts. Though grace be an in-

ternal principle, and most free from any constraint, yet it may be excited, or *stirred up* as the Apostle speaks, 2 Tim. 1. 6. by such means as God hath appointed hereunto, as prayer, meditation, reading, administration of our callings, as the Apostle intimates in the body of that forequoted Epistle. But perhaps there will a question arise concerning some other things, which may seem to lay a constraint upon the spirits of men. I deny not but that the seemingly religious motions of many men are meerly violent, and their devotion is purely forc'd as we shall see by and by: but I affirm, and I think have confirmed it, that true and sincere Religion is perfectly free and unconstrain'd. This being premised, now if you ask me what I think of *afflictions*, I confess God doth ordinarily use them as means to make good men better, and it may be sometimes to make bad men good: these may be as *weights* to hasten and speed the Souls motions towards God, but they do not principally beget such motions. If you ask me of temporal  
*prosperity,*

prosperity, commonly called mercies and blessings, of promises and Rewards propounded; I confess they may be as oyle to the wheels, and ought to quicken and encourage to the study of true and powerful godliness; but they are not the spring of the souls motions: they ought to be unto us, as dew upon the grass to refresh and fructifie the Soul; but it is the root which properly gives life and growth.

Secondly, It may be granted that there is a kind of constraint and necessity lying upon the godly Soul, in its holy and most excellent motions: according to that of the Apostle, 2 Cor. 5. 14. *The love of Christ constraineth us*; and again, 1 Cor. 9. 16. *Necessity is laid upon me to preach the Gospel*. But yet it holds good, that grace is a most free principle in the Soul, and that where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. For the constraint that the Apostle speaks of is not opposed to *freedom of Soul*, but to *not acting*; Now although the Soul so principled and spirited cannot but act,

yet it acts freely. Those things that are according to nature though they be done necessarily, yet are they done with the greatest freedom imaginable. The water flows, and the fire burns necessarily, yet freely: Religion is a new nature in the soul, and the religious Soul being toucht effectually with the sense, and imprest with the influences of divine goodness, fulness and perfection, is carryed indeed necessarily towards God as its proper centre, and yet its motions are pure, free, generous and with the greatest delight and pleasure conceivable. The necessity that lay upon *Paul* to preach the Gospel is not to be understood of any external violence that was done to him, much less of bodily necessity, by reason of which many men serve *their own bellies* in that great function, more than the Lord Jesus; for though he preacht the Gospel necessarily, yet did he preach freely and willingly, as he oft professeth. The godly Soul cannot but love God as his chiefest good, yet he delights in this necessity, under which



which he lyeth, and is exceeding glad that he finds his heart framed and enlarged to love him. I say *enlarged*, because God is such an object, as do's not contract and pinch and straiten the soul, as all created objects do, but ennoble, amplate, and enlarge it. The sinful soul, the more it lets out, and lays out, and spends it self upon the creature, the more it is straitened and contracted, and the native freedom of it is enslaved, debased, and destroyed: but grace do's establish and ennoble the freedom of the Soul, and restore it to its primitive perfection: so that a godly soul is never more large, more at rest, more at liberty, than when it finds it self delivered from all self-confining creature-loves and lusts, and under the most powerful-influences and constraint of infinite love and goodness.

By this that hath been said of the free and generous spirit of true Religion, we may learn what to think of the forced devotion of many prest Souldiers of Christ in his Church militant; that there is a vast difference and

and distance between the *prest*, and the *imprest* Christian. Though indeed the freedom of the will cannot be destroyed, yet in opposition to a principle, many mens devotion may be said to be wrung out of them, and their obedience may be said to be constrained. I shall explain it briefly in two or three particulars,

I. Men force *themselves* many times to some things in Religion, that are besides, yea and against their nature and genius. I need not instance in an overly conformity to the letter of the law, and some external duties which they force themselves to perform, as to hear, pray, give almes, or the like: in all which the violent and unnatural obedience of a *pharisee* may be more popular and specious, than the true and genuine obedience of a free-born disciple of Jesus Christ. If going on hunting, and catching of Venison might denominate a good and dutiful Son, *Esau* may indeed be as acceptable to his father, as *Jacob*; but God is not such a father as *Isaac*, ( whose affections were bribed with fat morsels, )

morsels, ) he feeds not upon the pains of his children, nor drinks the sweat of their brows. I doubt not but that an unprincipled Christian, that hath the heart of a slave; may also force himself to imitate the more spiritual part of Religion, and as it were to act over the very temper and disposition of a son of God. Therefore we read of a semblance of joy and zeal, which was found in some, whom yet our Saviour reckons no better than *stony ground*, Mark 4. 16. and of great extasies in some, whom yet the Apostle supposes may come to nothing, *Heb. 6. 5.* and what appearance of the most excellent and divine graces of *patience*, and *contempt of the world* many of the fowrer sort of *Monastical Papists*, and our mungrel breed of *Papists*, the *Quakers* do make at this day, all men know: nay some of these last sort do seem to themselves I believe, to act over the temper and experiences of the chiefest Apostles, rejoicing with *Peter* and the rest that they are *counted worthy to suffer shame*, *Act. 5. 41.* and keeping

a catalogue of their stripes with *Paul*, 2 Cor. 11. 24. and in these things, I am confident ( to use the Apostles words ) that they think themselves *not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles*: nay they are not ashamed to lay claim to that grace of graces, *self-denial*, which they have forced themselves to act over so *artificially*, that even a wise man might almost be deceived into favourable opinion of them, but that we know that whilst they *profess* it they *destroy* it; for it is contrary to the nature of self-denial to magnifie and boast it self: And indeed it is very evident to a wise observer, that these men by a pretence of voluntary humility, and counterfeit self-denial, do in truth endeavour most of all to establish their own righteousness, and erect an Idol of *self-supremacy*, in themselves, and do really fall in love with an *αὐτάρκεια* or *self-sufficiency*, instead of the infiniteness of God.

Now there seem to be *three* things in a formal hypocrite, that do especially force a kind of devotion and shew  
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of Religion from him; viz. *Conscience of guilt, self-love, and False apprehensions of God.* First, There is in all men a *natural conscience of guilt*, arising from that imperfect and glimmering light that they have of God, and of their duty towards him; which though it be in some men more quick and stinging, in others more remiss and languid, yet I think is not utterly choaked and extinguished, no not in the worst and most dissolute men, but that it doth sometimes beget a bitter sadness in the midst of their sweetest merriments, and doth disturb their most supine and secure rest, by fastning its stings in their very souls at some time or other, and filling them with agonies and anguish, and haunting them with dreadful apparitions, which they cannot be perfectly rid of, no more than they can run away from themselves. This *foundation of hell* is layed in the bowels of sin it self, as a preface to *eternal horror*. Now although some more profligate and desperate wretches, do furiously bluster through these briars, yet

yet others are so caught in them, that they cannot escape these pangs and throws, except they make a *composition*, and enter into terms to live more *honestly*, or at least, *less scandalously*. In which undertaking they are carried on in the next place, by the power of *self-love*, or a natural desire of *self-preservation*: For the worst of men hath so much *Reason* left him, that he could wish that himself were happy, though he have not so much *light* as to discover, nor so much true *freedom of will* as to choose the right way of happiness. Conscience having discovered the certain reward and wages of sin, *self-love* will easily prompt men to do something or other to escape it. But Now what shall they do? why Religion is the only expedient that can be found out; and therefore they begin to think *how* they may become friends with God, they will up and be doing. But how come they to run into so great mistake about religion? why their *false and gross apprehensions* of God do drive them from him, in the way of *superstition*.

*perstition* and *hypocrisie*, instead of leading them in the way of *sincere love*, and *self-resignation* to him. Self being the great *Dians* of every natural man, and the only standard by which he measures all things, he knows not how to judge of God himself, but by this; and so he comes to fancy God in a dreadful manner, as an austere, passionate, surly, revengeful Majesty, and so something must be done to appease him: but yet he fancies this angry Deity to be of an impotent, mercenary temper like himself, and not hard to be appeased neither; and so imagines that some cheap services, specious oblations, external courtesies will engage him, and make him a friend, a *sheep* or a *goat*, or a *bullock* under the old Testament; a *prayer* or a *Sacrament*, or an *Almes* under the new. For it is *reconciliation* to an *angry* God that he aims at, not *union* with a *good* God; he seeks to be reconciled to God, not united to him, though indeed these two can never be divided. Thus we see how a man void of the *Heart* and *Spirit* of Religion,



ligion, yet forces himself to do God a kind of worship, and pay him a kind of homage.

2. Sometimes men may be said in a sense to be forced by *other men* to put on a vizard of holiness, a dress of Religion. And this constraint men may lay upon men by their *tongues, hands, and eyes*. By their *tongues*, in the business of *education*, often and ardent exhortation and inculcation of things divine and heavenly: and thus an unjust man, like the unjust Judge in the Gospel, though he *fear not God* sincerely, yet may be overcome by the importunity of his father, friend, minister, tutor, to do some righteous acts. This seems to have been the case of *Jash* King of *Judah*, the spring head of whose religion was no higher than the instructions of his tutor and guardian *Jehojada* the high-priest, *2 Kings* 12. 2. By their *hands*, that is, either by the enacting and executing of penal laws upon them, or by the holy example which they continually set before them; *exemplā trahunt*. By their *eyes*, that is, by continual

continual observing and watching their behaviour; when many eyes are upon men they must do something to satisfy expectations of others, and purchase a reputation to themselves. It may be said that sometimes God doth lay an external force upon men; as particularly by his severe judgements or threatnings of judgements, awakening them, humbling them, and constraining them to some kind of worship and religion. Such a forc'd devotion as this, was the humiliation of *Ahab*, 1 *King.* 21. and the supplication of *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 13. 11, 12. For God himself acting upon men only from without them, is far from producing a living principle of free and noble Religion in the Soul.

Now the better to discern this forc'd and violent Religion, I will briefly describe it by three or four of its properties, with which I will shut up this point.

1. This forc'd Religion is for the most part *dry and spiritless*. I know indeed that *Fancy* may be screw'd up to a high pitch of joy and frolickness so

so as to raise the mind into a kind of a rapture, as I have formerly hinted in my discourse upon these words. A meer artificial and counterfeit Christian, may be so strongly acted by imagination, and the power of self-love, that he may seem to himself to be fuller of God than the sober and constant soul. You may see how the hypocritical pharisees swollen with self-conceit, gloried over the poor man that had been blind, but now saw more than all they, John 9. 34. *Thou wast altogether born in sin, and dost thou teach us?* and indeed over the whole people, John 7. 49. *This people that knoweth not the law is cursed.* A counterfeit Christian may rise high as a *Meteor*, and blaze as much as a *Commet*, which is yet drawn up by meer force from the surface of the earth or water. And as to the external and visible acts and duties of Religion which depend much upon the temper and constitution of the body, it may easily be conceived and accounted, how the mimical and mechanical Christian may rise higher in these, and

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be more zealous, watchful, and cheerful, than many truly religious and godly men; as having greater power and quickness of fancy, and a greater number of animal spirits; upon which the motions and actions of the body do mainly depend. The animal spirits may so nimbly serve the soul in these corporal acts, that the whole transaction may be a fair imitation of the motions of the divine spirit, and one would verily think there were a gracious principle in the soul it self. This seems to be notably exemplified in captain *Jehu* whose religious actions (as he would fain have them to be esteemed, *2 Kin. 10. 16.*) were indeed rather *Fury* than *Zeal*, and proceeded more from his own *fiery spirits*, than from that *spirit of Fire*, or *spirit of burning*, which is of God, *Isa. 4. 4.* But commonly this forc'd devotion is jejune and dry; void of zeal and warmth, drives on heavily in pursuit of *the God of Israel*; as *Pharaoh* did in pursuit of the *Israel of God*, when his Chariot wheels were taken off, *Exod. 14.* Gods drawing the Soul  
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from within, as a principle, doth indeed cause that soul to run after him, *Cant.* 1. 4. but you know the motion of those things that are drawn by external force is commonly *heavy, slow and languid.*

2. This forc'd Religion is *penurious and needy.* Something the slavish spirited Christian must do, to appease an angry God, or to allay a storming conscience, as I hinted before; but it shall be as little as may be. He is ready to grudge God so much of his time and strength, and to find fault that Sabbaths come so *thick*, and last so *long*, and that duties are to be performed so often: so he is described by the Prophet, *Amos 8. 5. When will the Sabbath be past, and the new Moon gone?* But yet I will not deny, but that this kind of Religion may be very *liberal and expensive* too, and run out much into the branches of external duties, as is the manner of many trees that bear no fruit; for so did the base spirit of the Pharisees, whose often fasting, and long praying is recorded by our Saviour in the Gospel, but

but not with approbation. Therefore these are not the things by which you must take measure, and make estimate of your religion. But in the great things of the Law, in the grand duties of *mortification*, *self-denial* and *resignation*; here this forc'd Religion is alwayes very stingy and penurious. In the duties that do nearly touch upon their beloved lusts, they will be as strict with God as may be, they will break with him for a small matter: God must have no more than his due, as they blasphemously phrase it in their hearts; With the slothful servant in the Gospel, *Lo there thou hast that is thine*, self and the world sure may be allowed the rest. They will not part with all for Christ, *Matth. 19. 22.* is it not a little one? let me escape thither, and take up my abode there, said *Lot*, *Gen. 19.* They will not give up themselves entirely unto God; *the Lord pardon me in this one thing*, cries *Naaman*; so they in this or that let God hold me excused. The slavish spirited Christian is never more  
shrunken

shrunken up within himself, than when he is to converse with God indeed: But the Godly soul is never freer, larger, gladder, than when he doth most intimately and familiarly converse with God. The Soul that is Free as to *liberty*, is free also as to *liberality*, and expences; and that not only in external, but internal and spiritual obedience, and compliance with the will of God: he gives himself wholly up to God, knows no interest of his own, keeps no reserve for himself, or for the Creature.

3. This forc'd Religion is *uneven*, as depending upon inconstant causes. As land-floods that have no spring within themselves vary their motions, are swift and slow, high and low, according as they are supplied with rain; even so these mens motions in Religion, depending upon Fancy for the most part, (than which nothing is more fickle and flitting,) have no constancy nor consistency in them. I know indeed, that the spirits of the best men cannot



not alwayes keep one pace, nor their lives be alwayes of one piece; but yet they are never willingly quite out of the call or compass of Religion. But this I also toucht upon formerly. Therefore,

4. This forc'd Religion is *not permanent*. The Meteors will down again, and be choakt in the earth whence they arose. Take away the weight, and the motion ceases; take away *Jehojadab*, and *Joash* stands still, yea runs backward. But this I shall speak more unto, when I come to speak of the last property of Religion, *viz. its perseverance*.

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## CHAP. IV.

*The active and vigorous nature of true Religion proved by many Scriptural phrases of the most powerfull importance: More particularly explained in three things; First, In the Souls continual care and study to be good; Secondly, In its care to do good;*  
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Thirdly,

Thirdly, In its powersfull and incessant longings after the most full enjoyment of God. In all which the causes and reasons of the same are either more obscurely intimated, or openly assigned.

**I** Come now to the Second property of true Religion, which is to be found in this phrase, *an quern, springing up* or leaping up; wherein the *Activity* and *vigorousness* of it is described. Religion though it be compared to *water*, yet is no standing *pool* of *water*, but a *well* of *Water* springing up. And here the proposition that I shall go upon is, that *True Religion is active and vigorous*: It is no lazy and languid thing, but full of life and power: so I find it every where described in Scripture, by things that are most *active*, *lively*, *vigorous*, *operative*, *spreading*, *powersfull*; and sometimes even by *motion* it self. As *sin* is in Scripture described by *death* and *darkness*, which are a cessation and privation of life and light and motion; so Religion is described by *life*, which

which is active and vigorous, by an *Angelical life*, which is spiritual and powerfull, yea a *divine life*, *Ephes.* 4. 18. which is, as I may say, most lively and vivacious, *Christ liveth in me*, *Gal.* 2. 20. and the production of this new nature in the Soul is called a *quickning*, *Ephes.* 2. 1. and the reception of it a *passing from death unto life*, *Joh.* 5. 24. Again, as sin and wickedness is described by *flesh*, which is sluggish and unactive, so this holy Principle in the Soul is called *spirit*, *Gal.* 5. 17. *the spirit lusteth against the flesh*; yea, *the spirit of power*, *2 Tim.* 1. 6. and *the spirit of life*, *Rom.* 8. 2: *the Law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the Law of sin and death*. How can the power and activity of any principle be more commended, than by saying it is *life*, and *the spirit of life*, and *the Law of the spirit of life in the soul*? which hath made me sometimes to apply those words of the Prophecy as a description of every godly soul? *Mic.* 3. 8. *I am full of power and might by the spirit of the Lord.*

Yea further, the holy Apostle seems to describe a godly principle in the soul by activity and *motion* it self, *Phil.* 3. 12, 13, 14. where he gives this excellent character of himself, and this lively description of his religious disposition, as if it were nothing else but activity and fervour, I follow after that I may apprehend, I forget those things that are behind, and reach forth unto those things that are before, I press towards the mark, &c. It were too much to comment upon those phrases of like importance, *labouring, seeking, striving, fighting, running, wrestling, panting, longing, hungering, thirsting, watching,* and many others which the Holy Ghost makes use of up and down the Scriptures, to express the active, industrious, vigorous, diligent and powerfull nature of this divine principle, which God hath put into the Souls of his elect. The streams of divine grace which flow forth from the throne of God and of the Lamb into the souls of men, do not cleanse them, and so pass away, like some violent Land-Flood

Flood that washes the fields and meadows, and so leaves them to contract as much filth as ever; but the same become a *well of water*, continually springing up, boyling and bubling and working in the Soul, and sending out fresh rivers, *ὕδατος ζῶντος*, as our Saviour calls them, Joh. 7. 38. *Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*

But more particularly to unfold the Active nature of this divine principle in the soul, we shall consider it in these three particulars, *viz.* as it is still conforming to God, Doing for him, and longing after him.

1. The Active and Sprightly nature of true Godliness or Religion planted by God in the soul appears and shews it self in a *continued care and study to be good, to conform more and more to the nature of the blessed God, the glorious pattern of all perfection.* The nature of God being infinitely and absolutely perfect, is the only rule of perfection to the Creature. If we speak of *Goodness*, our Saviour tells us that God alone is good,

*Luke 18. 19. of wisdom, the Apostle tells us, that God is only wise, 1 Tim. 1. 17. of power, he is omnipotent, Rev. 19. 6. of mercy and kindness, he is love it self, 1 Job. 4. 8. men are only good by way of participation from God, and in a way of assimilation to him: so that though good men may be imitated, and followed, yet it must be with a quatenus with this limitation, as far forth as they are followers of God: the great Apostle durst not press his example any further, 1 Cor. 11. 1. Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. But the nature of God being infinitely and absolutely perfect, is to be eyed and imitated singly, entirely, universally, in all things wherein the creature is capable of following him, and becoming like unto him. So Christians are required to look up unto the Father of lights, the fountain of all perfections, and to take from him the pattern of their dispositions and conversations, to eye him continually, and cying him, *εὐαγγέλιον θεῶν περὶ αὐτοῦ*, to derive an image of him (not into their eye, as we*

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we do by sensible objects but ) into their souls, to polish and frame them into the most clear and lively resemblances of him; that is in the language of the Scripture, to be perfect, *as their heavenly Father is perfect*, Mat. 5. 44, 45, 48. to be *holy as God is holy*, 1 Pet. 1. 16. And thus the genuine children of God are described by the Holy Ghost, *Ephes. 5. 1.* they are *followers of God*. This is the shortest, but the surest and clearest mark that can be given of a good man, *a follower of God*: They are not owned for the children of God, who are created by him, nor they who have a notional knowledge of him, who profess him, or exhibit some external worship and service to him in the world; but they that imitate him: the true children of *Abraham* were not those that were descended from him, or boasted of him, but they that did the works of *Abraham*, *Job. 8. 39.* even so are they only the off-spring of Heaven, the true and dear children of the living God, who are followers of him; *be ye followers of God as*



*dear Children.* A godly soul having its eyes opened to behold the infinite beauty, purity and perfection of that good God whose nature is the very *Fountain*, and must needs then be the *Rule* of all goodness, presently comes to undervalue all created excellencies both in it self and all the World besides, as to any satisfaction that is to be had in them, or any perfection that can be acquired by them, and cannot endure to take up with any lower good, or live by any lower rule than God himself. A godly man having the unclean and rebellious spirit cast out, and being once reconciled to the nature of God, is daily labouring to be more intimately united thereunto, and to be all that which God is (as far as he is capable,) the nature of God being infinitely more pure and perfect, and more desirable than his own. Religion is a participation of life from him who is life it self, and so must needs be an active principle spreading it self in the soul, and causing the soul to spread it self in God: And therefore the *Kingdom of Heaven*,  
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which in many places of the Gospel, I take to be nothing else but this divine principle in the soul, which is both the truest *Heaven*, and most properly a *Kingdom*, ( for thereby God doth most powerfully reign and exercise his Sovereignty, and most excellently display and manifest his glory in the world ) is compared to *seed sown in good ground*, which both springeth up into a blade, and bringeth forth fruit; to *Mutard-seed*, which spreadeth its self, and groweth great, so that the birds of the air may lodge in the branches thereof; to *Leaven*, spreading it self thorow the whole quantity of meal, and leavening the whole and all the parts of it, *Matth. 13.* By a like similitude, the path of the just is compared to a *shining light*, whose glory and lustre encreaseth continually, shining more and more unto the perfect day, *Prov. 4. 18.* which continual growing up of the holy soul into God, is excellently described by the Apostle in an elegant Metaphor, *2 Cor. 3. 18.* *We all with open face, beholding as in a glasse, the glory of the Lord, are changed*

*into the same image from glory to glory; that is, from one resemblance of divine glory to another. The gracious Soul not being contented with its present attainments, and having in its eye a perfect and absolute good, forgets that which is behinde, and labours, prayes, strives, and studies to get the perfections of God more clearly copied out upon it self, and it self as much as may be, swallowed up in the divinity: It covets earnestly these best things, to be perfected in grace and holiness, to have divine characters more fair and legible, divine impressions more deep and lively, divine life more strong and powerfull, and the communicable Image of the blessed God spread quite over it, and through it: A godly soul is not content to receive of Christ's fulness, but labours to be filled with the fulness, with all the fulness of God; he rejoyces indeed, that he hath received of Christ grace for grace, as a child hath limb for limb with his Father; but this his joy is not fulfilled, except he find himself adding daily some cubits to his Infiniture;*

stature; nor indeed then neither, nor can it be, untill he come to the *measure of the stature* of his Lord, and be grown up into him in all things, who is the head, even Christ, *Ephes. 4. 15.* He delights and glories in God, beholding his spices *growing* in his soul; but that does not satisfy him, except he may see them *flowing* out also, *Cant. 4. 16.* He is neither *barren nor unfruitful*, as the Apostle Peter speaks; but that is not enough, he desires to be fat and fruitful also, as a *watered Garden*, as the Prophet phraseth it, even as the *Garden of God*. The spirit lusteth against the flesh, and struggles with it in the same womb of the Soul, as *Jacob* with *Esau*, untill he had cast him out: The seed of God warreth continually against the seed of the Serpent, raging and restless, like *Jehu* shooting, and stabbing, and strangling all he meets with, till none at all remain of the family of that *Ahab*, who had formerly been his Master: Oh how do's the godly and devout soul long to have Christ's victory carried on in it self, to have Christ going on

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in him conquering and to conquer, till at length the very last enemy be subdued, that the Prince of Peace may ride triumphantly thorow all the Coasts and Regions of his heart and life, and not so much as a Dog move his tongue against him! This holy Principle which is of God in the soul, is actually industrious too; it doth not fold the arms together, hide its hand in its bosom, faintly wishing to obtain a final conquest over its enemies, but advances it self with a noble stoutness against lusts and passions, even as the Sun glorieth against the darkness of the night, untill it have chased it all away. The godly soul puts it self under the banner of Christ, fights under the conduct of the Angel of God's presence, and so marches up undauntedly against the children of *Anak*, those earthly loves, lusts, sensual affections, which are indeed taller and stronger than all other enemies that do encounter it in this Wilderness state: and the gracious God is not wanting to such endeavours, he remembering his promise, helpeth his servants, even that promise,

promise, *Isa.* 49. 31. That they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength. A true Israelitish soul impregnated with this noble and heroick principle, is not like those slothful *Israelites*, that were content with what they had got of the holy Land, and either could not, or cared not to enlarge their border, *Judg.* 1. But he makes war upon the remainder of the *Canaanites*, and is never at rest till he have with *Sarah*, cast out the bond-woman and her Son too. You may see an emblem of such a soul in *Moses* holding up his hands all the day long, till *Amalek* was quite discomfited, *Exo.* 17. As oft as the floods of temptation, springing from the Devil, the world, or the flesh, do offer to come in upon him, he opposeth them in the strength of Christ, or if you will, in the Prophets phrase, (*Isa.* 59. 19.) *The Spirit of the Lord lifteth up a standard against them*, so that he is not carried down by them, or at least, not overwhelmed with them. In the beginning of my discourse upon this head, I hinted to you the reason why the godly Soul continually

continually studies conformity to God, even because he is the perfect and absolute good, and the Soul reckons that its happiness consists only in being like unto him, in partaking of a divine nature. But I might also here take occasion to speak of three things, which I will but briefly name, and so pass on.

*First*, A godly man reckons with himself, that conformity to the Image and Nature of God, is the most proper conversing with God in the World. The great, and indeed only employment of an immortal Soul, is to converse with its Creator; for this end it was made, and made so capacious as we see it: Now to partake of a divine nature, to be-endued with a God-like disposition, is most properly to converse with God; this is a real, powerful, practical and feeling converse with him, infinitely to be preferred before all notions, professions, performances, or speculations.

*Secondly*, A godly man reckons that the image of God is the glory and ornament of the Soul; it is the lustre and brightness,



brightness, and beauty of the Soul, as the Soul is of the Body. Holiness is not only the duty, but the highest honour and dignity that any created nature is capable of: And therefore the godly soul, (who hath his senses exercised to discern good and evil) pursues after it, as after his full and proper perfection.

*Thirdly,* A godly man reckons that conformity to the divine image, participation of the divine nature, is the surest and most comfortable evidence of divine love, which is a matter of so great enquiry in the world. By *growing up* daily in Christ Jesus, we are infallibly assured of our *implantation* into him. The Spirit of God descending upon the Soul in the impressions of meekness, kindness, uprightness, which is a *Dove-like disposition*, is a better, and more desirable evidence of our Sonship, and God's favour towards us, than if we had the Spirit descending upon our heads in a *Dove-like shape*, as it did upon our blessed Saviour. These things may pass for a kind of reasons, why the Religious Christian,

Christian, above all things, labours to become God-like, to be formed more and more into a resemblance of the supreme good, and to drink in divine perfections into the very inmost of his Soul.

2. The active and industrious nature of true Godliness, or Religion manifests its self in a good man's *continual care, and study to do good, to serve the interest of the holy and blessed God in the world.* A good man being mastered with the sense of the infinite goodness of God, and the great end of his life, cannot think it worth while to spend himself for any inferiour good, or bestow his time and strength for any lower end than that is; and therefore as it is the main *happiness* of his life to *enjoy* God, so he makes it the main *business* of his life to *serve* him, to be doing for him, to lay out himself for him, and to display and propagate his glory in the World. And as he is ravished with the apprehensions of the supreme goodness, which doth infinitely deserve, and may justly challenge all that he can do or expend for him,

him, so he doth indeed really partake of the active and communicative nature of that blessed Being, and himself becomes active and communicative too: A godly soul sluggish and unactive, is as if one should say, a godly soul altogether unlike to God; a pure contradiction. I cannot dwell upon any of those particular designs of serving the interest of God's glory, which a good man is still driving on in the world: Only this in general, whether he pray, or preach, or read, or celebrate Sabbaths, or administer private reproof or instruction, or indeed plow or sow, eat or drink, all this while he lives not to himself, but serves an higher interest than that of the flesh, and a higher good than himself, or any created Being. A true Christian activity doth not on'y appear in those things which we call *duties of Worship*, or Religious performances; but in the whole frame of the heart contriving, and the conversation expressing and unfolding the glory of God. A holy, serious, heavenly, humble; sober, righteous, and self-denying

denying course of life, do's most excellently express the divine glory, by imitating the nature of God, and most effectually call all men to the imitation of it; according as our Saviour hath nakedly stated the case, *Joh. 15. 8. Hereby is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit*: By which fruits are not to be understood only preaching, praying, conference, which are indeed high and excellent duties; but also righteousness, temperance, self-denial, which things are pure reflections of the divine Image, and a real glorifying of God's Name and perfections. A good Christian cannot be content to be happy alone, to be still drawing down Heaven into his own Soul; but he endeavours also both by prayer, counsel, and holy example, to draw up the Souls of other men Heaven-ward. This God witnesseth of *Abraham, Gen. 18. 19. I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord*: And this *Moses* doth excellently witness of himself in that holy rapture of his, *Numb. 11. 29. Would God*

God that all the Lord's people were Prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them ! By such examples as these a good man desires to live, yea by higher presidents than either Abraham or Moses, even by the example of the Father and of the Son : He admires and strives to imitate that character which is given of God himself, *Psal. 119. 68. Thou art good, and doest good* ; and that which is given of Christ Jesus, the Lord of life, *Act. 10. 38. Who went about doing good* ; who also witnessed elsewhere concerning himself, that he came not into the World to do his own will, nor seek his own glory, but the will and glory of him that sent him : And again, *Luk. 2. 49. Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business ?* Oh how happy would the godly soul count it self, if it could but live and converse in the world at the same rate, and with the same devout, fervent, exalted spirit, as Christ Jesus did, whose meat and drink it was still to be doing the will, and advancing the glory of his Father ! But ( *Alas* ) the poor soul finds it self ensnared by passions,

passions, and selfish affections from within, clogg'd with an unweildy body, and distracted with secular affairs from without, that it cannot rise so nimbly, run so swiftly, nor serve the infinite and glorious God so chearfully, nor liberally, as it would, and therefore the poor prisoner sighs within it self, and wishes that it might escape: But finding a certain time determined upon it in the body, which it must be content to live out, it looks up, and is ready to envy the Angels of God, because it cannot live as they do, who are alwayes upon God's errand, and almost thinks much that it self is not a *Ministring Spirit*, serving the pure and perfect will of the supreme good, without grudging or ceasing. The godly soul under these powerful apprehensions of the nature of God, the example of Christ, and the honourable office of the holy Angels, is ready to grudge the body that attendance that it calls for, and those offices which it is forc'd to perform to it; as judging them impertinent to its main happiness, and most excellent employment;

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it is ready to envy that more chearful and willing service, which it finds from the heavy and drossy body with which it is united, and to cry out, Oh that I were that to my God, which my body, my eyes, hands and feet are to me ! For I say to one of these, go, and he goeth : and to another, do this, and he doeth it. In a word, a good man being acquainted feelingly with the highest good, eyeing diligently the great end of his coming into the world, and his short time of being in it, serves the Eternal and Blessed God, lives upon eternal designs ; and by consecrating all his actions unto God, gives a kinde of an immortality to them, which are in themselves flitting and transient : He counts it a reproach to any man, much more to a godly man, to do any thing insignificantly, much more to live impertinently ; and he reckons all things that have not a tendency to the highest good, and a subserviency to the great and last end, to be impertinencies, yea and absurdities in an immortal Soul, which should continually be *springing up into everlasting life.*

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3. The active and vigorous nature of true Religion, manifests it self in those *powerfull and incessant longings after God*, with which it fills that soul in which it is planted. This I superadd to the two former, because the godly man, though he be formed into some likeness to God, yet desires to be more like him; and though he be somewhat serviceable to him, yet desires to be more instrumental to his will: though he be good, yet he desires to be better; and though he do good, yet he desires to do better, or at least more. And indeed, I reckon that these sincere and holy hunglings after God, which I am going to speak of, are one of the best signs that I know in the world, of spiritual health, and the best *επιτηδειον* of a true Christian: For in this low and animal state, we are better acquainted with lovings and languishings, than with fruition or satisfaction; and the best enjoyment that we have of God in this world, is but scant and short, indeed but a kind of *a longing to enjoy him*. Love is certainly a high and noble affection; but (alas) our love,

love, whilst we are here in the body, is in its non-age, in its weak and sickly state, rather a *longing*, than a *loving*, much unlike to what it will be, when it shall be grown up unto its perfect stature in glory. But this *sickly* kind of languishing affection, is a certain symptom of a *healthful* constitution, or (as the Apostle calls it) of *the spirit of a sound mind*. Godly souls are thirsty Souls, alwayes gasping after the living springs of divine grace, even as the parched Desert gapeth for the dew of Heaven, the early and the later rain. One would wonder what kind of Magick there was in *Elijahs* Mantle, that the very casting of it upon *Elisha* should make him leave Oxen and Plough, yea Father and Mother and all, to run after a stranger: *Elijah* himself seems to wonder at it, 1 King. 19. 20. *What have I done to thee?* Oh but what a mighty charm is there in divine love! which when it is once shed abroad in the Soul, makes the Soul to spread it self in it, and to it, as the *heliotrope* attending the motions of the Sun, and turning it self every

every way towards it, welcoming its warm and refreshing beams. *Elijah* passing by *Elisha* as he was at plough, and catching him with his mantle, is but a scant resemblance of the blessed God passing by a carnal minde, and wrapping it in the mantle of his love, and thereby causing it to run, yea to flye swiftly after him. If divine grace do but once touch the Soul, the Soul presently sticks to it, as the needle to the Load-stone. They that heard Christ Jesus chiding the winds and the waves, cryed out, *what manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him*: But if one had been present when he called *James* and *John* from their nets, *Matthew* from the Custome-house; and *Zacheus* from the tree, and by calling made them willing to come, would have cryed out sure, *what manner of God is this*, that by his bare word, makes poor men leave their trades and livelyhood, and rich men their gainfull exactions, usuries, oppressions to follow him, and shews them no reason why. What a mighty vertue is there in the  
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oyntment of Christs name, that as soon as it is poured out, the Virgins fall in love with him, *Cant.* 1. 3 ? *Micah* cryed out when he was in pursuit of his Gods, and should they ask him what ailed him ? And will ye wonder at a holy Soul in pursuit of the holy God should be earnest ; that he should run, and cry as he runs, as I have seen a fond child whom the father or mother have endeavoured to leave behind them. God breathing into the Soul, makes the Soul breath after him, and in a mixture of holy disdain and anger, to thrust away from it self all distracting companions, occasions and concernments, saying with *Ephraim* to her Idols, *Get ye hence* : The Soul thus inspired is so far from prostituting it self to any earthly, sensual, selfish lusts and loves, that it cannot brook any thing that would weaken it in the prosecution of the highest good ; it is impatient of every thing that would either stop or slacken its motions after God. The godly man desires still to be doing something for God indeed ;

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but if the case so fall out that he cannot spend his life for God as he desires, yet he will be spending his soul upon him : though he cannot perpetually abide upon the *knee of prayer*, yet he would be continually upon the *wing of faith and love* : when his tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth that he cannot speak for God, yet his soul shall cleave unto him, and complain because it can speak no longer. For faith and love are knitting graces, and do long to make the soul as much one with their object, as is possible for the creature to be with its Creator. Religion puts a restless appetite into the soul after a higher good, and makes it to throw it self into his arms, and wind it self into his embraces, longing to be in a more intimate conjunction with him, or rather entirely wrapt up in him : It self is an unsatiable and covetous principle in the soul, much like to the *daughter of the horseleech*, crying continually *Give, Give* : what the Prophet speaks rhetorically of *Hell*, *Isa. 50.* is also true concerning this off-

off-spring of *Heaven*, in the Soul, it enlargeth it self, and openeth its mouth without measure. The spirit of true godliness seems to be altogether such, that it cannot rest in any measures of grace, or be fully contented with any of its attainments in this life; but ardently longs to receive the more plentiful *communications* of love, the more deep and legible *impressions* of grace, the more clear and ample *experiences* of divine assistance, the more sensible *evidences* of divine favour, the more powerfull and ravishing *illapses* and *incomes* of divine consolation into it self, *let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth*, Cant. 1. 2. such is the spirit of true godliness, that the weakest that is endued with it, longs to be as *David*, and the  *Davids* to be as God, as the Angel of the Lord, according to that promise, *Zach. 12. 8*. The godly soul that is in his right senses, under the powerful apprehensions of the loveliness of God, and the beauty of holiness, cannot be content to live by any lower instance than that of *David*, whose soul even broke

for the longing that it had unto the Lord, *Psal.* 119. 20. or that of the spouse, who was even *sick of love*, *Cant.* 2. 5. You have read of the Mother of *Sisera*, looking out at the window waiting for his coming, and crying through the lattices, *why is his Chariot so long in coming; why tarry the wheels of his Chariots?* But this is not to be compared to the *ἡμετέρα* *ἡμετέρα* the earnest expectation of the creature, the new creature, waiting for the manifestation of God; which the Apostle elegantly expresseth, and yet seems to labour for words, as if he could not sufficiently express it neither, *Rom.* 8. 23. you have read of the Israelites marching up towards the promised land, and murmuring that they were held so long in the wilderness: But the true Israelitish Soul makes more hast with less discontent, marches as under the conduct of the *Angle of Gods presence*, and longs to arrive at its rest: But alas it is held in the wilderness too, and therefore cannot be fully quiet in it self, but sends forth spies to view the land, the scouts



scouts of Faith and Hope like Caleb and Josua those men of another spirit, and these go and walk through the holy land, and return home to the soul, and come back, not as Noahs dove with an Olive leaf in her mouth, but with some clusters in their hands, they bring the soul a taste of the good things of the Kingdom, of the glories of her eternal state : yea the soul it self marches up to possess the land, goes out, with the spouse in the *Canticles*, to meet the Lord, to seek him whom her soul loveth. Religion is a sacred fire kept burning in the temple of the soul continually, which being once kindled from Heaven, never goes out, but burns up Heaven-wards, as the nature of fire is : this fire is kept alive in the soul to all eternity, though sometimes through the ashes of earthly cares and concernments cast into it, or the Sun of earthly prosperity shining upon it, it may sometimes burn more dimly, and seem almost as if it were quite smothered : this fire is for sacrifice too, though sacrifice be not alwayes offered upon

it ; the same fire of faith and love which offered up the morning Sacrifice is kept alive all the day long , and is ready to kindle the evening Sacrifice too , when the appointed time of it shall come. In this chariot of fire it is that the soul is continually carryed out towards God, and accomplisheth a kind of *Sanctification* or glorification daily ; and when it finds it self firmly seated and swiftly carryed herein , it no longer envies the translation of *Elias*. The spirit of sanctification is in the soul as a burning fire shut up in the bones , which makes the soul weary with forbearing , and so powerfull in longings , that it cannot stay ; as the spirit of prophesie , is described , *Jer. 20.* it is more true of the spirit of God than of the spirit of *Elihu* , the spirit within constraineth , and even dresseth the soul , so that it is ready to swoon and faint away for very vehemence of longing. See the amorous spouse falling into one of these fainting fits , *Cant. 2. 5.* and crying out mainly for some cordial from  
Heaven

Heaven to keep up her sinking spirits, *Stay me with figons, straw me with apples, for I am sick of love.* Oh beautiful and blessed sight, a soul working towards God, gasping and longing and labouring after its proper happiness and perfection! Well, the sinking soul is relieved, Christ Jesus reacheth forth his left hand to her head, and his right hand embraceth her; and now she recovers, her hanging hands lift up themselves, and the beauties of her fading complexion are restored; now she sits down *under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet unto her taste.* See here, the fairest sight on this side Heaven; a soul resting, and glorying, and spreading it self in the arms of God, growing up in him, growing great in him, growing full in his fulness, and perfectly ravished with his pure love! *O my soul, be not content to live by any lower instance!* did not our hearts burn within us said the two Disciples one to the other, whilst he talked with us? But the soul in which the sacred fire of

love is powerfully kindled, doth not only burn towards God, whilst he is more familiarly present with it, and as it were blows upon it; but if he seem to withdraw from it, it burns after him still; *my beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone, I sought him, I called him*, Cant. 5. 6. And if the fire begin to languish, and seem as if it would go out, the holy soule is startled presently, and labours *ἐναζωπυρεῖν*, as the Apostle speaks, to revive it and blow it up again, calls upon it self to awake, to arise and pursue to mend its pace, and to speed its heavy and sluggish motions. This divine active principle in the soul maintains a continual striving, a holy struggling and stretching forth of the soul towards God, a bold and ardent contention after the supream good; *μεγάλας ἔχει κινήσεις ἢ ἐλσέβηα*, Religion hath the strength of the Divinity in it, its motions towards its object are quick and potent. That elegant description which the Prophet makes of the wicked heart, with some change may be brought lively to express

express this excellent temper of the  
godly soul; it is like the working Sea  
which cannot rest: and although its  
waters do not cast up *mire and dirt*,  
yet in a holy impatience, they rise  
and swell, and cast up a froth and  
foame towards Heaven. In a word  
that I may comprise many things in  
few expressions, no man so ambi-  
tious as the humble, none so covetous  
as the heavenly-minded, none so vo-  
luptuous as the self-denying: Religion  
gives a largeness and wideness to the  
soul, which sin, and self, and the world  
had straightned and confined: But his  
*Ambition* is only to be great in God,  
his *Covetousness* is only to be filled  
with all the fulness of God, and his  
*voluptuousness* is only to drink of the  
rivers of his pure pleasures: He de-  
sires to taste the God whom he sees,  
and to be satisfied with the God  
whom he tastes. Oh now, how are  
all the faculties of the soul awakened  
to attendance upon the Lord of life!  
It hearkens for the sound of his feet  
coming, the noise of his hands knock-  
ing at the door, it stands upon its

watch tower waiting for his appearing, waiting more earnestly than they that watch for the morning, and rejoyces to meet him at his coming; and having met him, runs into his arms, kisses him, holds him and will not let him go, but brings him into the house, and entertains him in the guest-chamber: The soul complains that it self is not large enough, that there is not room enough to entertain so glorious a guest, no not though it have given him all the room that it hath: It entertains him with the *widest arms*, and the *sweetest smiles*; and if he depart and withdraw, fetches him again with the *deepest groans*, Return, Return, O Prince of Peace, and make me an everlasting habitation of righteousness unto thy self!

It will not be amiss here briefly to touch upon the Reason of the godly souls so ardent pantings after God. And here I might shew first *negatively*, that it springs not from any *carnal ambition* of being better and higher than others, not from any *carnal hope*.

hope of impunity and safety, nor merely from the bitter sense of pressing and tormenting afflictions in this life. But I shall rather insist upon it affirmatively. These earnest breathings after God spring from the feeling apprehensions of self-indigency and insufficiency, and the powerful sense of divine goodness and fulness, they are begotten of the divine Bounty and self-sufficiency manifesting it self to the spirits of men, and conceived and brought forth by a deep sense of self-poverty: one might almost apply the Apostles words to this purpose, *we receive the sentence of death in our selves that we should not trust in our selves, but in him.* I shall not discourse upon these two heads disjunctly, but frame them into one notion, and so you may take it thus; these holy longings of the godly soul after God, do arise from the sense of its distance from God. To be so far distant from God who is life and love it self, and the proper and full happiness of the soul, is grievous to the soul that is rightly affected towards him; and



and hence it is that the soul cannot be at rest, but still longs to be more intimately joyned to him, and more perfectly filled with him: and the clearer the souls apprehensions are of its object, and the deeper its sense is of its own unlikeness to him, and distance from him, the more strong and impatient are its breathings; insomuch that not only *fear* (as the Apostle speaks,) but even love it self sometimes seems to it self to have a kind of agony and *torment* in it self; which made the spouse cry she was *sick of love*, that is, sick of every thing that kept her from her love, sick of that distance at which she stood from her beloved Lord. The godly soul being ravisht with the infinite sweetness and goodness of God, longs to be that rather than what it self is, and beholding how it is estranged from him, by many sensual loves, selfish passions, corporal clogs and distractions, bewails its distance, and cryes out within it self, *Oh when shall I come and appear before God!* Oh when will God  
come

come and appear gloriously to me  
and in me ! *who will deliver me  
from this body of death !* Oh that  
mortality were swallowed up of life !  
*Dauids* soul did wait for God as  
*earnestly* , and more *properly* than  
they that watch for the morning ;  
they may be said rather to be *weary*  
of the long and cold and trouble-  
some night , than properly *covetous*  
of the day ; but he out of a pure  
and spiritual sense of his estrange-  
ment from God longs to appear be-  
fore him , and be wrapt up in him.  
Heal the Godly man of all his af-  
flictions , grievances , adversities in  
the world , that he may have no-  
thing to trouble him , nor put him  
to pain ; yet he is not quiet, he is  
in pain because of the distance  
whereat he stands from God ; give  
him the whole world and all the  
glory of it , yet he has not enough,  
he still cryes and craves *give , give* ,  
because he is not entirely swallow-  
ed up in God : he openeth his  
mouth wide , as the Psalmist  
speaks , and all the Silver and Gold ,  
peace,

peace, health, liberty, preferment, that you cast into it, cannot fill it; because they are not God, he cannot look upon them as his chiefest good. In a word, A godly man doth not so much say, in the sense either of *sin* or *affliction*, *Oh that one would give me the wings of a Dove*, that I might fly away and be at rest, as in the sense of his *dissemblance* to, and *distance* from God, *Oh that one would give me the wings of an Eagle*, that I might fly away towards Heaven!

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**CHAP.**

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CHAP. V.

*An exhortation with Christians concerning their remiss and sluggish temper, an essay to convince them of it by some considerations; which are, first, The activity of worldly men; secondly, The restless appetites of the body; thirdly, The strong propensions of every creature, towards its own centre: An enquiry into the slothfulness and inactivity of Christian souls: two things premised, and so an answer is given to the enquiry in five particulars. The grace of faith is vindicated from the slander of being merely passive. A short essay to awaken Christians unto a greater vigour and activity.*

**W**E have seen in what respects Religion is an *Active* principle in the Soul where it is seated: give me leave to enlarge a little here for *Conviction* or *Reprehension*.

*Christians convicted of spiritual slath.*

hension. By this property of true Religion we shall be able to discover much that is false and counterfeit in the world. If Religion be no lazy, languid, sluggish, passive thing, but *life, love, the spirit of power and Freedom*, a fire burning, a well of water springing up, as we have sufficiently seen, what shall we say then of that heavy, sluggish, spiritless kind of Religion that most men take up with? Shall we call it a *spirit of life*, with the Apostle; and yet allow of a Religion that is cold and *dead*? shall we call it a spirit of love and power, with the same Apostle; and yet allow of it, though it be indifferent low, and impotent? or will such pass for currant with the wise and holy God, if we should pass a favourable censure upon it? And why should it ever pass with them, if it will not for ever pass with God? But indeed how can this inactivity and sluggishness pass for Religion amongst men? who can think you are in pursuit of the infinite and supream good, that sees you so slow in your motions towards it? who

who can think that your treasure is in Heaven, that sees your heart so far from thence? The more any thing partakes of God, and the nearer it comes to him who is the fountain of life and power and vertue, the more active, powerful and lively will it be. We read of an Atheistical generation in *Zeph. i. 12.* who fancied to themselves an idle and slothful God, that minded not the affairs of the world at all, saying, *the Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil*; which was also the false and gross conceit of many of the Heathen, as *Cicero* confesses of some of the Philosophers themselves, *qui Deum nihil habere negotii dicunt & nihil exhibere alteri*; And indeed though it be not so blasphemous, yet it is almost as absurd, to fancy an idle Saint, as an idle Deity. Sure I am, if it be not altogether impossible, yet it is altogether a shameful and deformed sight, a holy soul in a lethargy, a godly soul that is not in pursuit of God. *Moses* indeed bids *Israel stand still and see the salvation of the Lord*; but there is  
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no such divinity in the holy Scriptures as this, stand still and see the salvation of the soul ( though some have violently prest those words, *Exod. 14. 13.* to serve under their slothful standard : ) No, no, the Scripture speaks to us at another rate, *Phil. 2. 12.* *κατασκευάζετε* work out your own salvation : and indeed the spirit of God doth everywhere describe Religion by the activity, industry, vigour and quietness of it, as I hinted in the very beginning of this discourse, and could abundantly confirm and explain, if there were need of it.

But that I may more powerfully convince and awaken the lazy and heavy spirit and temper of many professors, I will briefly touch upon a few particulars, which I will next propound to their serious consideration.

1. *The children of this world, earthly and sensual men, are not so slothful, so lazy, so indifferent in the pursuit of earthly and sensual objects.* You say you have laid up your treasure in Heaven ; we know they have laid up their  
their



their treasure in the earth : now who is it that behaves himself most suitably and seemly towards his treasure ? you or they ? you say you have a treasure in Heaven, and are content to be able to say so, but make no haste to be fully and feelingly possess of it, to enjoy the benefit and sweetness of it. But they *rise up early, and sit up late*, and either pine themselves, or eat the bread of sorrow, to obtain earthly and perishing inheritances ; they circuit the world, travel farr, sell all to purchase that part which is of so great price with them : And when they have accomplisht it, oh how do they set their heart upon it, bind up their very souls, in the same bags with their money, and seal up their affections together with it : yea and so they are not at rest neither, but find a gnawing hunger upon their hearts after more still, to add *house to house, and land to land*, and one bagg to another ; the covetous miser is ready to sit down and wring his hands, because he hath no more hands to scrape with ; the voluptuous Epicure is angry that

that he hath not the neck of a Crane the better to taste his dainties, and ambitious *Alexander* when he domineers over the known world, is ready to sit down and whine, because there are no more worlds to conquer. What Christian can choose but be ashamed of himself, when he reads the description which *Plautus* the Comœdian makes of a covetous worldling, under the person of *Euclio*, how he hid his pot of Gold, heeded it, watcht it, visited it almost every hour, would not go from it in the day, could not sleep for it in the night, suspected every body that so much as lookt towards it, and by all means kept it even as his life? For where is the like eager and ardent disposition to be found in a Christian towards God himself? Tell me, is it possible for a man that vehemently loves a Virgin, to be content all his life long to Court her at a distance, and not care whether ever he do actually enjoy her or no? or must not such an one necessarily pursue a matrimonial and most intimate union with her? Let us now confess  
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the truth, and every one judge himself.

2. *This dull and earthly body is not so indifferently affected towards meat and drink, and rest, and the things that do serve its necessities, and gratifie its temper.* Hunger will break down stone walls, and thirst will give away a kingdom for a cup of water, sickness will not be eased by good words, nor will a drowsie brain be bribed by any entertainments of company or recreation: no, no, the necessities of the body must and will be relieved with food and physick and sleep; the restless and raging appetite will never cease calling and crying to the soul for supplies till it *arise and give them.* Behold O my Soul, consider the mighty and incessant appetites and tendencies of the body after sensual objects, after its suitable good and proper perfection, and be ashamed of thy more remiss and sluggish inclinations towards the highest good, a God-like perfection!

3. *No creature in the whole world is so languid, slow, and indifferent in its*

*its motions towards its proper rest and centre. How easie were it to call Heaven and earth to witness the free, pleasant, cheerful, eager addresses of every creature according to its kind, towards its own centre and happiness. The Sun in the Firmament rejoices to run its race, and will not stand still one moment, except it be miraculously overpowred by the command of God himself, the rivers seem to be in pain till by a continued flowing they have accomplit to themselves a kind of perfection, and be swallowed up in the bosome of the Ocean, except they be benumbed with cold, or otherwise overmastred and retarded by forraign violence; I need not instance in *sensitives* and *vegetatives*, all which you know with a natural vigour and activity do grow up dayly towards a perfect state and stature. Were it not a strange and monstrous sight, to see a stone settling in the ayre, and not working towards its centre? such a spectacle is a godly soul settling upon earth, and not endeavouring a nearer and more intimate union with its*

*God.*

God. Wherefore Christians, either *cease* to pretend that you have chosen God for your portion, centre, happiness, or else arise and *cease not* to pursue and accomplish the closest union and the most familiar conjunction with him that your souls are capable of: ~~wherefore~~ call Heaven and Earth to witness against you this day: and the day is coming when you will be put to shame by the whole creation. Doth every (even the meanest) creature of God, pursue its end and perfection, and proper happiness with ardent and vehement longings; and shall a soul, the noblest of all creatures, stand folding up it self in it self, or choaking up its wide and divine capacity with dust and dirt; shall a godly soul the noblest of all souls hang the wings, suspend its motions towards the supream good, or so much as once offer to faint and languish in its enterprizes for eternal life? Tell it not at *Athens*, publish it not at *Rome*, lest the Heathen Philosophers deride; and hiss us out of the world.

But

But you will ask me when a Christian may be said to be sluggish and unactive, and who these lazy souls are. I will *promise* two things, and then give you a brief account of them. *First*, When I speak of a sluggish and spiritless Religion, I do not speak as the hot-spirited ~~Antichristians~~ *Chilists*, who being themselves acted by a strange *fervour of mind*, miscalled *zeal*, are wont to declaim against all men as cold and benumbed in their spirits, who do not call for *fire from Heaven* to consume all dissenters, under the notion of *Antichristian*; who are not afraid to reproach the divine, holy, gentle, yet generous spirit of Religion, calling it weak, womanish, cowardly, low, cold, and I know not what. These men I believe (so far as I can guess at their spirit) if they had lived in the *dayes of our Saviour*, and had beheld that gentle, meek, humble, peaceable and pacate spirit, which did infinitely shine forth in him, would have gone nigh to have reproved him for not carrying on his own Kingdom with sufficient vigour and activity;

activity ; if not have judged *Christ* himself to be much *Antichristian*. I hope you see nothing in all my discoveries of the Active spirit of Religion, that savours of such a fiery spirit as this is. *Secondly*, when I do so highly commend the Active spirit of true Religion, and the vigorous temper of truly Religious souls, I would not be understood, as if I thought all such souls were alike swift, or that any such soul did alwaies move with like swiftness, and keep a like pace towards God. I know that there are different sizes of *Active souls*, yea and different degrees of *Activity* in the same soul : as may be seen, *Cant. 5.3.* compared with the sixth verse of the same chapter; and in many other places of Scripture.

But yet that none may flatter and deceive themselves with an Opinion of their being what indeed they are not, I will briefly discover the sluggishness and inactivity of Christians in a few particulars. I pray take it not ill though the greatest part of Christians be found guilty ; for that



is no other than what Christ himself hath prophesied.

1. *The Active spirit of Religion in the soul will not suffer men to take up their rest in a constant course of external performances ; and they are but slothful souls that do place their Religion in any thing without them. By external performances, I mean not only open and publick and solemn services, but even the most private, and secret performances that are in and by the body, and ab extra to the soul. It is not possible that a soul should be happy in any thing that is extrinsecal to it self; no not in God himself, if we consider him only as something without the soul: The devil himself knows and sees much of God without him, but having no communications of a divine nature or life, being perfectly estranged from the life of God, he remains perfectly miserable. I doubt it is a common deceit in the world, men toyl and labour in bodily acts of worship and Religion in a slavish and mercenary manner, and think (with those labourers*

bourers in the parable ) that at the end they must needs receive great wages, and much thanks, because they have born *the heat and burden of the day*. Alas that ever men should so grossly mistake the nature of Religion, as to sink it into a few bodily acts and carcase-services, and to think it is nothing else but a running the round of duties and ordinances, and a keeping up a constant set and course of actions ! such an external legal righteousness the Apostle *Paul* after his conversion, could not take up with, but counted it all *loss and dung* in comparison of that Godlike righteousness which was now brought into his soul, that inward and spiritual conformity to Christ, which was now wrought in him, *Phil. 3. 9, 10*. I know indeed that men will be loth to confess that they place their Religion in any thing without them ; but I pray consider seriously wherein you excell other men, save only in praying or hearing now and then, or some other outward acts, and judge your selves by your *nature*, and not by your *actions*.

2. *The Active spirit of Religion, where it is in the soul, will not suffer men to take up their rest in a meer pardon of sin; and they are but slothfull souls that could be so satisfied. Blessed is the man indeed whose iniquities are pardoned, Psal. 32. 1, 2. but if we could suppose a soul to be acquitted of the guilt of all sin, and yet to lie bound under the dominion of lusts and passions, and to live without God in the world, he were yet far from true blessedness. A re-all hell and misery will arise out of the very bowels of sin and wickedness, though there should be no reserve of fire and brimstone in the world to come. It is utterly impossible that a Soul should be happy out of God, though it had the greatest security imaginable that it should never suffer any thing from him. The highest care and ambition indeed of a slavish and mercenary spirit is to be secured from the wrath and vengeance of God, but the breathings of the ingenuous and holy soul, are after a divine life, and Godlike perfections,*

sections, This right gracious temper you may see in David, Psal. 51. 9, 10, 11, 12. which is also the temper of every truly Religious soul.

3. The *Active spirit of Religion* where it is in the soul, will not suffer men to take up their rest in meer innocence, freedom from sin; and they are slothful souls that could count it happiness enough to be harmless. I doubt men are much mistaken about holiness; it is more than meer innocence, or freedom from the guilt or power of sin, it is not a *negative* thing; there is something *active, noble, divine, powerful* in true Religion. A soul that rightly understands its own penury and self-insufficiency, and the emptiness and meanness of all creature-good, cannot possibly take up its rest, or place its happiness, in any thing but in a real participation of God himself; and therefore is continually making out towards that God from whom it came, and is labouring to unite it self more and more unto him. Let a low-spirited, fleshly-minded Pharisee take up with a

negative holiness and happiness, as he doth Luke 18. 11. *God I thank thee that I am not so and so :* a noble and high-spirited Christian cannot take up his rest in any negation or freedom from sin. Every godly soul is not so learned indeed as to be able to describe the nature and proper perfection of a soul, and to tell you how the happiness of a soul consists, not *in quiete*, but *in actu & vigore*, not in cessation and rest, as the happiness of a stone doth, but in life and power and vigour, as the happiness of God himself doth : But yet the spirit of true Religion is so excellent and powerfull in every godly soul, that it is still carrying it to the fuller enjoyment of an higher good; and the soul doth find and feel within it self (though it cannot discourse Philosophically of these things) that though it were free from all disturbance of sin and affliction in the world, yet still it wants some supream and possible good to make it compleatly happy, and so bends all its power thitherward. This is the description which you will every

everywhere find made in Scripture of the true spirit of holiness, which hath always something positive and divine in it, as Isa. 1. 16, 17. *cease to do evil, learn to do well*; and Ephes. 4. 22, 24. *Put off the old man, put on that new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*. And accordingly a truly godly soul (to use the Apostles words) though he know nothing by himself, yet doth not thereby count himself happy.

4. *The active spirit of true Religion, where it is in the Soul, will not suffer men to take up their rest in some measures of grace received; and so far as the soul doth, so it is sluggish and less Active than it ought to be. This indeed oft times comes to pass, when the soul is under some distemper of proud selfishness, earthly-mindedness or the like, or is less apprehensive of its object and happiness; as it seems to have been the case of the spouse, Cant. 5. 3. Some such fainting fits, languishing, surfetings, insensibleness must be allowed to be in the Godly soul during its*  
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imprisoned and imperfect state: But we must not judge our selves by any present distempers, or infirmities. The nature of Religion, when it acts the soul rightly and powerfully, is to carry it after a more lively resemblance of God which is the most proper and excellent enjoyment of him. A mind rightly and actually *sound* is most sick of love; and the nature of love is, not to know when it is near enough to its object, but still to long after the most perfect conjunction with it. This *well of water*, if it be not violently obstructed for a time, is ever springing up till it be swallowed up in the Ocean of divine love and grace. The soul that is rightly acquainted with it self and its God, feels something still wanting in it self, and to be enjoyed in him, which makes it, that it cannot be at rest, but is still springing up into him, till it come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of its Lord. In this holy; loving; longing, striving, active temper we find the great Apostle, *Phil. 3. 12, 13, 14.* And by how much the more

of



of divine grace any soul hath drunk in, the more thirsty is it after much more.

5. *The Active spirit of true Religion, where it is powerfully seated in the minds of men will not suffer them to settle into a love of this animal life, nor indeed suffer them to be content to live for ever in such a kind of body as this; and that soul is in a degree lazy and slothful that doth not desire to depart and be with his Lord. The godly soul cying God as his perfect and full happiness, and finding that his being in the body doth separate him from God, keep him in a poor and imperfect state, and hinders his blissfull communion with the highest good, groans within it self that mortality were swallowed up of life, with the Apostle, 2 Cor. 5. 4. I know not how much, but I think he hath not very much of God, neither sight of him nor love of him, that could be content to abide for ever in this imperfect, mixed low state, and never be perfected in the full enjoyment of him. And it seems, that they in whom*

the love of God is rightly predominant, potent, flourishing, do also look earnestly for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life, Jude 2. without doubt they ought to do, 2 Pet. 3. 12. *What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God!*

Let this suffice by way of general Reprehension.

2. More particularly, the consideration of the Active nature of true Religion may well serve to correct a mistake about that noble grace of faith. How dishonourably do some speak of this excellent and powerfull grace, when they make it to be a slothfull, passive thing, an idle kind of waiting, or a Melancholick sitting still; wick indeed and in truth, is *Life and power*. Be not mistaken in so high and eminent a grace: True faith doth not only accept the imputed righteousness of Christ for justification, but by a lively dependance upon God, drinks in divine influences, and eagerly sucks in grace, and vertue  
and

and life from the fountain of grace for its more perfect sanctification : And for this cause ( I think ) a purifying vertue is ascribed to it , *Act. 15. 9.* Faith is not a lazy languid thing, content to wait for salvation till the world to come ; but it is even now gasping after it , and accomplishing it too in a way of *mortification* , *self-denyall* and *growing up in God* : it is not content to be a candidate waiting for life and happiness, but is actually drawing down Heaven into the soul, attracting God to it self, sucking in participations of divine grace and image into the soul : Its *metto* is that of the famous painter, *nulla dies sine lineâ* , it longs to find some divine *lineament* , some line of Gods image drawn upon the soul daily. Faith is a giving grace, as well as receiving; it gives up the whole soul to God, and is troubled that it can give him no more : it binds over the soul afresh to God every day , and is troubled that it can bind it no faster, nor closer to him. The believing soul is *wearied because of murderers* , murdering

ing loves, lusts, cares, earthly pleasures, and calls mightily upon Christ to come and take vengeance upon them: it is wearyed because of those robbers that are daily stealing away precious time and affections from God, which are due unto him, and calls upon Christ to come and *scourge* these thieves, these buyers and sellers out of his own *Temple*. In a word, the godly soul is *Active*, and faith is the very life and *Action* of the soul it self.

Lastly, Let me exhort all Christians from hence to be zealous, to be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, and longing after him; *Stir up the grace of God* that is in you; *Quench not*, i. e. blow up, enflame the spirit of God in you. Awake Christian soul out of thy Lethargy, and rejoyce as the Sun to run the race that is set before thee, and as a mighty man refreshed with Wine to fight thy spiritual battels against the armies of uncircumcised prophane and earthly concupiscences, love, and passions. Eye God as your centre, the enjoyment of him

him as the Happiness, and full conformity to him as the perfection of your souls; and then say Awake, Arise O my Soul, and hide not thy hand in thy bosome, but throw thy self into the very heart and bosome of God, lay hold upon eternal life. Again, observe how all things in the world pursue their several perfectons with unwearied and impatient longings, and say, come my soul, and do thou likewise. Converse not with God so much under the notion of a *Law-giver*, but as with *love* it self; nor with his commands as having *authority* in them, but as having *goodness* and *life* and *sweetness* in them. Again, consider your poverty as creatures, and how utterly impossible it is for you to be happy in your selves; and say, Arise O my soul from off this weak and tottering foundation, and build thy self up in God; cease pinching thy self within the straits of self-sufficiencies, and come, stretch thy self upon infinite Goodness and Fulness. Again pore not upon your attainments, do not sit brooding upon your present accomplishments,

plishments, but forget the things that are behind, and say, **Awake O my soul,** there is yet infinitely much more in God, pursue after him for it, till thou have gotten as much as a created Being is capable to receive of the divine nature. In a word, take heed you live not by the lowest examples, (which thing keeps many in a dwindling state all their dayes) but by the highest: **Read over the Spouse her temper, sick of Love; Davids temper,** waiting for God more than they that watch for the morning, breaking in heart for the longing that he had to the Lord, and say, **Arise O my Soul,** and live as high as the highest, it is no fault to desire to be as Good, as holy, as happy as an Angel of God, *And thus O my soul open thy mouth wide, and God hath promised to fill thee!*

**CHAP.**

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CHAP. VI.

*That Religion is a lasting and persevering principle in the souls of men, proved by several Scriptures. The grounds of this perseverance assigned, first negatively; It doth not arise from the absolute inmissibility of grace in the creature, nor from the strength of mans Free-will. Secondly Affirmatively, the grace of election cannot fail. The grace of Justification is neither suspended nor violated: The Covenant of grace is everlasting: The Mediator of this Covenant lives for ever: The promises of it immutable; The righteousness brought in by the Messiah everlasting. An objection answered concerning a regenerate mans willing his own apostasie. An Objection answered drawn from the falls of Saints in Scripture, as also from those Scriptures that seem to imply a mans falling away. A discovery of counterfeit Religion and the shamesfull apostasie*



*apostasie of false professors. An encouragement to all holy diligence, from the consideration of this doctrine, the rather that we may stop the mouths of those that falsely affirm that the same is prejudicial to true goodness.*

**I** Come now to the third property of true Religion contained in these words, and that is the *perseverance* of it. And here the foundation of my following discourse shall be this proposition.

*True Religion is a lasting and persevering principle in the Souls of good men.* It is said of the hypocritical Jews, that their goodness was as the *early dew that soon passeth away*, Hos. 6. 4. But that principle of true goodness which God planteth in the souls of his people is compared to a *well of water*, evermore sending forth fresh streams, and incessantly springing up towards God himself: our Saviour compares hypocritical professors to *seed sown upon stony ground*, that springs up indeed, but soon withers away

away, *Mark* 4. 5, 6. but this well of water which is in the sincere godly soul, springs up into everlasting life, it springs and is never dried up, it is a spring of water, whose waters fail not, or lyes not, as it is exprest by the Prophet, *Isa.* 58. 11. or if you look upon it under the Metaphor of oyle, as it is sometimes exprest in Scripture, then it is truly that Oyle that faileth not, whereof the Widow of *Sarepthahs* cruise of Oyle was but a scant resemblance. Amongst other Texts which the learned Dr. *Arrowsmith* brings to prove the infallibility of the perseverance of Saints, this speech of our Saviours which is the subject of my whole discourse, is one; who also quoteth *Theophylact* for the same mind, viz. the perseverance of this principle, yea and somewhat more, even the growth and multiplication of it. To the same purpose the same excellent Author quoteth, *Joh.* 10. 27, 28. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any

any man pluck them out of my hand. In which words our Saviour strongly asserteth the certain glorification of his elect, by using a Verb of the present tense, *I give unto them eternal life*; he will as certainly give it them as if they had it already; except the words do imply that they have it already, viz. the beginnings of it, even in this life; and if so, then the words do yet more strongly assert the doctrine of *perseverance*; for how can that life be called eternal, which may be ended? In the same words he seemeth purposely to prevent fears, and before hand to answer objections, by securing them both from *internal* and *external* enemies, they shall never perish (viz. of their own accord) neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand; for the word in the original is such as doth secure them from the power of Devils as well as men; and what is said of the Church in general, is also certain concerning every true member of it in particular; *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*. Christ hath not only chosen and ordained

ordained his people that they should be holy, but also that they should persevere in holiness; not only that they should bring forth good fruits, but that their fruits should remain, Joh. 15. 16. Hence they are said to be born again of *incorruptible* seed, which liveth and abideth for ever, 1 Pet. 1. 23. And he that is born of God, is said to have the seed of God in him, and remaining in him, and so remaining in him as that he shall never again commit sin, that is, shall not become any more ungodly, 1 Job. 3. 9. To all which may be added that strong and strengthening text, Rom. 8. 38, 39. *I am perswaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord:* which one text doth excellently assert both those high and comfortable doctrines of Assurance and perseverance; and they are worthily to be honoured in the Church of God, who have vindicated

dicated it from the corrupt glosses  
 and cavils of the Papists, who have  
 endeavoured to rob Christians of the  
 sweetness which may be suckt out of  
 that pregnant honey-comb: In a word,  
 let the holy Psalmists experience of the  
 supporting vertue of this doctrine  
 shut up the proof of it at present, who  
 found himself wonderfully comforted  
 by it after all his fears and foyle,  
*Psal. 73. 24.* where he sings of the  
 loving kindness of the Lord in time  
 past, *thou hast holden me by my right  
 hand;* and at present, *I am continu-  
 ally with thee,* that is, thou art con-  
 tinually with me; and with the like  
 courage and confidence he speaks of  
 all time to come, *thou shalt guide me  
 with thy counsel, and afterwards re-  
 ceive me to glory.* Now although the  
 doctrine of the perseverance of Saints  
 be thus fully and clearly laid down in  
 Scripture, yet it is easie to erre in  
 giving an account of it and of the  
 grounds of it. And therefore I shall  
 proceed to the grounds of it, which  
 I will briefly lay down *negatively* and  
*affirmatively.* First *negatively,*

1. The

1. The certain perseverance of the Saints in a state of grace doth not arise from the *absolute inamissibility of grace in the creature*: It is one thing to affirm that grace shall *not be lost*, and an other thing to affirm that it is absolutely *unloseable*: God hath told us that the world shall no more be drowned, but who will say for all that, that it is not in it self capable of drowning? whilest we think to honour God by asserting the permanency of grace, we must take heed lest we make a God of grace, and so dishonour him. Grace as it is in God, in the fountain, which Divines sometimes call *Active Grace* is eternal and unchangeable, not subject to any defection or alteration. There is no time, or place, or case wherein the love and goodness of God faileth towards his elect. It is one and the same in God towards his people even when they are under the greatest desertions, and have no sense at all of it; we must not say the Sun is grown dark, as oft as a dark cloud interposeth between it and our sight.

Yea

Yea however it be most certain that the *pure* and *holy* God hateth sin even in his elect, yet it is also certain that the *good* and *gracious* God loveth the persons of his Saints, even at what  
 “time they sin : For the love of God  
 “towards the regenerate ( *saith learn-*  
 “*ed Davenant* ) is not bottomed up-  
 “on their perfect purity and holiness ;  
 “but upon Christ Jesus the Mediator ,  
 “who hath transferred their sins upon  
 “himself, and so hath redeemed them  
 “from the wrath of God. The love  
 and kindness of God towards his  
 people is absolutely unchangeable and  
 everlasting. But grace in the crea-  
 ture , it self being a creature, is not  
 simply and absolutely unchangeable  
 or unloseable : There is a possibi-  
 lity of losing inherent grace if it be  
 considered in it self ; yea and it would  
 actually be lost and perish , but that  
 God upholdeth his people with one  
 hand whilst he exerciseth them with  
 the other. Though with all my might  
 I desire to maintain the perseverance  
 of the Saints, yet I dare not ( *as the*  
*manner of some is* ) ground it upon  
 the



the firmness and rootedness of faith in man, but upon the goodness and faithfulness of God, which is such towards his elect, that he will keep them by his mighty power through faith unto salvation, as the Apostle expresseth it, 1 Pet. 1. 5.

2. It doth not arise from *the strength of mans Free-will*, as if he were of himself able to keep himself for ever in a state of grace, when God had once put him into it. The Saints indeed shall for ever will their own perseverance (as we shall see anon) but it is God that worketh in them even this will, Phil. 2. 13. mans own Free-will or self-sufficiency, is so far from being the ground of his perseverance in grace and holiness; that I do believe nothing in the world is more directly contrary to grace than habitual and predominant self confidence; and even in the Saints themselves, there is nothing that doth strike a greater stroke towards their apostasie, than this self-conceit and confidence of their own strength, as something distinct from God,

God; though the same be not habitual and predominant, for they themselves are many times sadly weakned and set back by that means and suffer many lamentable spiritual decayes. This seems to have sometimes been the case of *Hezekiah* and of *David* too, and had like to have been the case of *Paul*, when he had so much abounded in Revelations, 2 *Cor.* 12. 7. sure it is, that nothing doth more estrange the hearts of Gods people from him, nor bind up the influences of divine grace and favour from them, than this security, confidence in the strength of their own wills, and vain opinion of self-sufficiency, which thing the sad experience of many holy Christians doth attest: not only the Apostles *James* and *Peter*, but indeed all the true Disciples of Christ in the world doth agree to the truth of that Proverb, *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.* In a word, though to do justly and to love mercy; have indeed much of Religion in them, yet unto perseverance it is also required that a man deny himself and  
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the sufficiency of his own Free-will, and (in the Prophets expression) *walk humbly with his God.* You know whose brag it was, *Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended,* and again, *Though I should dye with thee, yet will I not deny thee;* and what was the lamentable consequence of this self-confidence, you know likewise: wherefore let him that standeth by his own strength, take heed lest he fall.

I proceed now to speak something affirmatively concerning the grounds of the Saints perseverance in a state of grace. I have already shewed you that Active Grace is absolutely of an immutable nature: And although passive Grace be not so, yet it shall not be lost totally and finally.

For,

1. *The grace of Election cannot fail.* When I think of that uncertain, conditional, mutable decree of saving men, which some ascribe to God, who is infinite and eternal wisdom and oneness, methinks I may with

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great reason apply the Apostles words spoken concerning himself, and say when God is thus graciously minded to Elect his people to eternal life, *doth he use lightness, or the things that he purposeth, doth he purpose according to the flesh*; after the manner of men, who are unsteady and wavering in their determinations? Is there with him *yea, yea, and nay, nay*? what doth the Apostle mean by those words, 2 Tim. 2. 19. *The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his*? The Apostle in the foregoing Verse; having related the apostasie of Hymeneus and Philetus, and the overthrow of some mens faith by their means, immediately subjoyns this comfortable doctrine of the stedfastness and firmness of Gods decree of election, to prevent the offence which the Saints might take against the falls of others, and to relieve them against the fears that they might possibly conceive concerning their own perseverance; and let no one be offended, as if the salvation of the Elect stood at uncertainties;

tainties; it appears that these men were none of Gods elect, because they are seduced, and the faith that they had is overthrown; and as for your part who are elected, fear not lest ye also should apostatize, it is not possible to deceive the elect in the necessary and fundamental truths of the Gospel, (*Matth. 24. 24.*) fear not lest ye also should be drawn away by the error of the wicked unto perdition, *For the foundation of God standeth sure, &c.* In which sentence, says Dr. *Arrowsmith*, almost every word breaths firmness and performance: nothing is more firm in a building than the foundation; that you may not doubt of that, it is also called *sure* or *steady*; this sure foundation is said to *stand*, i. e. (say the *Dutch Annotat.*) abideth steadfast and certain; for it is the foundation not of mans saying, but of God, with whom there is no *variableness* nor *shadow of change*: yea further, this foundation is said to be *sealed*; now what is accounted more firm and sure than those things which are sealed with a seal? especially

such a Seal as this, *The Lord knoweth who are his*; though the wisest of men are oft deceived in their opinions, yet the knowledge of God is infinitely infallible; according to that "of *Austin*, If any of the Elect perish, God is deceived; but God is not deceived, therefore none of the Elect can perish, for the Lord knoweth who are his. When *Samuel* indeed went to separate one of the Sons of *Jesse* from the rest of his brethren to be King over *Israel*, he first pitcht upon *Eliab*, and afterwards rejected him, *1 Sam. 16.* but God is guilty of no such inconstancy in that eternal election which he makes of men to be Kings and Priests unto himself. Those several acts of divine grace mentioned, *Rom. 8. 29, 30.* though they be many links, yet run one into another, and all from first to last make up but one chain; concerning which divine and mysterious concatenation one may boldly use that peremptory prohibition which our Lord useth concerning a less indissoluble conjunction, *Matth. 19. 6. What God hath*

bath joyned together, let no man put asunder.

2. The grace of Justification is neither suspended nor violated, it admits neither of intercession nor rescission, neither of pause nor period. There is nothing between Justification and glorification in the Apostles sentence, but the copulative [and] Rom. 8. 30. there is nothing between a justified soul and glory, but a meer passage into it. May we be allowed to triumph with the holy Apostle in the forequoted chapter, who shall bring an accusation against Gods elect? *It is God that justifieth.* But what though you be at present justified may some say, is there not a possibility of being unjustified again, may not the righteousness of the righteous be taken from him, may you not be condemned hereafter? But *who is he that shall condemn us? It is Christ that dyed:* As if the Apostle had said, the love of God towards his justified ones is not grounded upon their purity, loveliness or perfection, but it is founded in their Redeemer, which



Redeemer hath done enough, both to bring them into a justified state; and to keep them in it for ever; It is *Christ that dyed*, to free them from sin, it is *Christ that is risen again* for their justification; that *is at the right hand of God*, to deliver them from all their enemies, that *maketh intercession* for them; for their perseverance. God loves nothing but the communications of himself; so far as any thing partakes of the divine Image, so far it partakes of divine favour and complacency, so that whilest a good man bears a resemblance unto God, so long he shall be accepted of him, and embraced in the arms of his love; and that shall be for ever, as we shall see under the next head. Untill you have blotted out all the image and superscription of God out of a godly Soul, untill you have razed out all the stamps and impressions of goodness: in a word, untill you have rendred him wicked and ungodly, you cannot abandon him from the embraces of God, which thing Men and Devils shall never be able to do, as I have partly

partly shewed already, and shall yet shew more at large.

It is true indeed that *Adam* fell from a just state though not from a justified state, for that supposes sin formerly committed. But this is no great wonder; for he had his righteousness in himself, and his happiness in his own keeping: But the condition of Believers is now more safe and firm, as depending not upon any created power or will, but upon the infinite and effectual help and strength of a Mediator, which will never fail.

3. *The Covenant of grace is everlasting.* It hath pleased God to enter into a Covenant of grace and peace with every Believing Soul; which I suppose I need not go about to prove, all Christians acknowledging it, though they do not all agree in one notion of it. Now this Covenant, wherein God engages himself to be their God (for that is the summary Contents of it on his part) is expressly called by the Apostle *ἡ διαθήκη αἰώνιος*, the everlasting Covenant,

nant, Heb. 13.20. and again, Jer. 32.40. *I will make an everlasting Covenant with them: which Covenant and the everlastingness of it are fully explained in the following words, I will not turn away from them to do them good: The inviolable nature of this Covenant is also expressly asserted in that famous place, Jer. 31. 31, 32. I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel, not according to the Covenant that I made with their fathers, which my Covenant they brake: as if he had said, I will make a Covenant that shall not be subject to breaches: In the former Covenant with their fathers, I gave them laws to keep which they kept not, but in the New Covenant I will give them also a heart to keep my laws: It is not possible that Covenant should be broken, one principal part of which is an heart both able and willing to keep it. The similitudes which God useth in the 35, 36, 37. verses of that same chapter, do also further confirm and illustrate this Doctrine of the everlastingness of this Covenant of grace.*

Under

Under this head, let me glance at three things.

1. *The Mediator of this Covenant lives for ever, and lives to make intercession for Believers*, Heb. 7. 25. and from this the Apostle argues, that they shall be saved to the uttermost, or evermore, as the Margin reads it. From this also the Apostle argues the unchangeable state of Believers, as we observed before out of Rom. 8. 34. Christ Jesus is alwayes heard and accepted of the Father in all the requests that he maketh to him, according to that in Joh. 11. 41, 42. *Jesus lift up his eyes and said, Father I thank thee that thou hast heard me; And I know that thou hearest me alwayes.* If these things be so, then the perseverance of the Saints is built upon a most certain bottom, is secured against the very Gates of Hell, for Christ hath prayed for them that they may be where he is, *Joh. 17. 24.* and in the mean time that they may be kept from the evil, ver. 15. and that their Faith fail not, *Luke 22. 32.*

2. *The Promises of this Covenant are immutable, they are in Christ Jesus Tea and Amen, 2 Cor. 1. 20.* as if one should say in Latine, *Certo certiora*, perfectly sure and certain. God who is truth it self, will not, cannot be unto his people as a lyar, or *as waters that fail*, as the Prophets phrase is; the infinite fountain of grace and truth, cannot possibly become like one of the Brooks which *Job* speaks of, which seem to be full of water; and are so at a certain winter season, but when the poor scorched *Arabian* comes to look for water thence in Summer, he goes away ashamed, because they are now vanished, they are consumed out of their place, *Job* 6. 19, 20. Now the promise is concerning not only grace, but the final perseverance of it: If he promise pardoning grace, it is in these full and satisfying expressions, *I will remember their sin* (any one of their sins) *no more*, *Jer.* 31. 34. If he promise purging and purifying grace, it is in the like amplitude of phrase, *that they may fear me for ever*; and again, *they*

they shall not depart from me, Jer. 32. 39, 40. with many other places of like importance.

3. The righteousness brought in by this Mediator is δικαιοσύνη αἰώνιος, an everlasting righteousness, as it is expressly called, Dan. 9. 24. by which I do not understand the righteousness of Justification (which was alwayes one and the same, and there was never any righteousness of that kind temporary or fading) but the righteousness of real internal sanctification in opposition to that positive and temporary righteousness, which depended upon the pleasure of God that did prescribe it. This righteousness brought in and advanced by Christ (who in a powerful and vital way dispenseth the same by his holy Spirit unto the minds and Souls of men) is not only true and inward, (in opposition to the Pharisaical, which was an external conformity only) but it is of an everlasting and unchangeable nature; as being grounded upon and indeed conformable to eternal and unchangeable truth, in opposition to that

that temporary kind of righteousness which was grounded upon positive Laws, and the arbitrary commands of God, if I may so call them. This eternal righteousness is by Christ Jesus the Prince of life put into the very souls of men, and being a plant of his planting shall never be pluckt up. We read indeed in the Prophet *Ezekiel* that the glory of God departed out of the Temple made with hands; but this glory of God, his image; shall never depart out of the living Temple, the Souls of good men, having once powerfully displayed it self there. And therefore God is said to *dwell* in the Souls of his people, in opposition to a *wauering* man *who turneth in to tarry for a night*. God indeed hath promised that it shall be said to them that were not his people, *ye are the sons of the living God*, *Hos. 1. 10.* but never on the contrary; he hath no where threatned them that are the Sons of the living God that it shall at any time be said to them, *ye are not my people*. True indeed, as to external profession,



profession, Church-membership, meer Covenant-holiness, and outward communion, God doth many times disinherit and reject them that were so his people: but as to true godliness; participation of the divine image, internal and spiritual communion, we may confidently say with the Apostle to the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. 1. 9. *God is faithfull, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord*; or with the same Apostle to the *Thessalonians*, 1 Thess. 5. 24. *faithfull is he that calleth you, who also will do it*: Do what? why that which he was speaking of, and praying for, in ver. 23. *viz. preserve spirit and soul and body blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

I conclude then, that Grace in the Creature is a participation of him who is essential and perfect grace and goodness, a communication made by him of his holy nature, which becomes a living principle in the Souls of men, a fountain sending forth a continued stream of holy dispositions and affections without intercession or cessation:

*cessation*: Though these streams run sometimes higher, sometimes lower; sometimes swifter, sometimes slower, yet they are never wholly dried up as the brooks of *Tema* were. For where God hath once opened a fountain in the Soul, he feeds it with fresh supplies from himself; as a fountain it self would dry up, if it were not nourished by the supplies of subterraneous waters. The perseverance of grace depends purely upon the supports and supplies of uncreated essential life and goodness. But how do we know that God will certainly afford these supplies? We build upon his goodness and love in Christ towards his elect, which is infinite and unspeakable; and upon his faithfulness in accomplishing his promise, *viz.* that he will never leave nor forsake them, *Heb.* 13. 5. that he will keep them by his power unto salvation, *1 Pet.* 1. 5. They that are of the number of Gods holy and chosen ones shall no doubt continue of that number according to that in *1 Joh.* 2. 19. they that are truly in Christ shall abide in him,

him, 1 *Job.* 2. 27. the seed of God remaineth in the godly, and they cannot sin, because they are born of God, 1 *Joh.* 3. 9. *he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not,* 1 *Joh.* 5. 18. What can be more exprets and ample than that consolatory Promise of our Lord made to his poor frail sheep, *Joh.* 10. 28. *I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand.*

But some one may say perhaps, what if man *will* apostatize? what if the Saints themselves *will* forsake God? will he not then say of them, as the Apostle of the unbelieving husband, *If they will depart, let them depart?* Will not God forsake them that forsake him?

*Answer.* Yes, God will forsake them that forsake him; But they never shall forsake him: They being rightly renewed after the Image of God, and perfectly overpowered by his grace, shall never *will* any such departure: *I will betroth thee unto me*  
for

for ever, Hof. 2. 19. It is certain saith Dr. *Arrowsmith* that God will condemn all impenitent sinners; but it is as certain that all justified and regenerate sinners shall repent, *semper fit, procurante spiritu*. It seems unreasonable to demand what if man himself will apostatize; seeing he is by the grace of God so renewed in his will, and put into such a condition, that he cannot *will* any such thing. "God doth not give unto his "Saints (saith *Austin*) only such "help, without which they could not "persevere if they would (which was "that which he gave *Adam*; ) but "he also worketh in them the will: "that because they shall not perse- "vere except they both can and "will, his bountifull grace bestoweth "upon them both the *can* and the "will. For their will is so enflamed "by the Spirit of God, that they there- "fore can, because they so will, they "therefore so will, because God work- "eth in them to Will. Neither is it any disparagement or injury to the freedom of mans will, that it should be

be overpowered by divine grace, and determined only to that which is good. The indifferency and fluctuation of the will of man is indeed the imperfection of it, and the more God reveals himself to the Soul as the chiefest good, the more this indifferency of the will is destroyed, and the faculty is determined; not by being *constrained*, but indeed *perfected*. Oh unhappy liberty, for a Soul to be indifferently affected towards its own happiness, and to be free to choose its own misery! The noblest freedom in the world is, when a Soul being delivered from its hesitancies, and healed of its indifferencies, is carryed like a Ship with spread sails and powerfull winds in a most speedy, cheerfull and steady course into its own harbour, into the arms and embraces of its own object. The grace of God doth never so overpower the will of man as to reduce it to a condition of slavery, so as that man should not have a proper dominion over his own acts; but I think we do generally conclude that in the world to come, in the future

ture state, the wills of all glorified Saints shall be so advanced and perfected in their freedom, as not in the least to verge towards any thing that is evil, but shall in the most gladsome and steady manner be eternally carried towards their full and glorious object, which the glorified understanding shall then represent in a most true, clear and ample manner: And this we take to be the Souls truest liberty in the highest elevation of it. Now although it be not altogether thus with us in this present world, ( for by reason of the weakness and muddiness of our understandings which do here represent God unto us so faintly and disadvantageously, it comes to pass that the will cannot so freely and fervently, with so ardent and generous motions pursue its excellent object, as it shall do hereafter ) yet I believe that the more God reveals himself to any soul, the more the fluctuations and æquilibrinousness of it are healed, and a true liberty of will increased; and that he doth so far reveal himself  
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to every truly godly Soul, as to establish this noble freedom in him, in such a degree as will keep him from willing a final departure from him, and carry him certainly, (how remissly and faintly soever) towards the supreme and sovereign good, till he come to be perfectly swallowed up in it. A *will* thus truly and divinely free, though it be not the proper *efficient cause*, yet certainly is an inseparable *concomitant* of final perseverance. So then the more God communiceth himself to any Soul, the more powerfully it willet a nearer conjunction with him; and no Soul I conceive to whom God communiceth himself savingly can at any time will an utter separation from him.

As for the foulest falls of Scripture-Saints, that are any where recorded, I know not what more can rationally be inferred from them but that grace in the creature admits of ebbs and flows, is subject to augmentations and diminutions; which I know no sober person that denies. But I think  
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the history of their lapses, if we take it altogether, hath a very favourable aspect upon the doctrine of perseverance; yea, for ought I know, one great design of God in penning those relations might be to confirm this very doctrine, by giving us so express and ample an account of their *Repentance* and *Recovery*, that we are indeed to believe they were strengthened by their falls, so far were their falls from proving mortal to them: one would think that if ever the habits of grace should be utterly suffocated and extinct, if ever they should languish even unto death, it should be under the power of such contrary Acts as *David* and *Peter* committed, and especially *Solomon*, whose acts for ought I can see were as foul, and also often repeated, which is the likeliest thing that I know, to destroy gracious habits. I know there are instances given of good *Joash*, *Hymeneus*, *Alexander*, *Demas* utterly falling from that gracious state, wherein sometimes they had been. But it did never yet appear to me beyond contradiction, that

that ever they were any of them in such a state. *Joash* is put amongst the number of hypocrites by some that have rifled his story: And for ought that can evidently appear to the contrary, *Demas* might be no better. *Molt* is pleaded for *Hymeneus* and *Alexander* who put away a good Conscience, and made shipwreck of Faith, 1 Tim. 19. 20. But it do's not yet appear that the faith which they made shipwreck of, was any more than the profession or doctrine of the true faith; yea rather it doth appear that it was no more. Neither do's it at all appear that they ever had that good conscience which they are said (in our translation) to have put away, which may as fitly be rendred [ *rejected*; ] for that we find to be the most common use of the Greek word ἀρῶ or ἀρῶμαι, *arceo*, *prohibeo*, *resisto*, *renitor*, *repello*, to *reject*, *repell*, or *thrust away* from one. I am not confident that this apostasie of theirs was total neither, supposing it to be an Apostasie; for however their faith was *shipwreckt*, possibly

possibly some plank or other of it might be left. And who dare say that it was final? The Apostle doth not that I perceive give them up for lost, but executes discipline upon them as it seems for their recovery, of which one might think by the following words, that he had some hopes — *that they may learn not to blaspheme.* In short then, as to these two men, I conceive, that *good conscience* which they *put away* they never had, and the *faith* which they *had* was not *that good faith.* And as to the other two that were named, and indeed as to all other instances of the like nature, I suppose we may give this general answer, that *either they did but seem to stand, or they did but seem to fall:* the former perhaps was the case of *Joash*, and the latter of *Demas.* When ever you observe therefore the backslidings of any seeming Christians take heed of concluding rashly against the perseverance of Saints, but rather infer with the holy Apostle, *1 Joh. 2. 19. They went out from us, but they were not of us: had they*

they been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; Which words if they be meant only of a communion in doctrine and profession, so as to conclude against the separation of such as are indeed in such a communion; then we may argue the more strongly, *a minore ad majus* against the final apostasie of any that are in a higher and more excellent communion.

As for those texts of Scripture that seem to suppose a mans falling away from grace and turning from righteousness; I conceive a fair answer may be given unto them by distinguishing of righteousness; and so it may be granted that many men have turned away from, and utterly made shipwreck of their legal righteousness, consisting in an external conformity to the letter of the Precepts of the Law, void of the supernatural and Divine Principle: it is indeed the common lot of these men that spring up thus fairly, and yet have no root, to wither away, *Mat. 13. 6. Luk. 8. 6.* And yet on the other hand it abides  
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an everlasting maxim of truth, *Who-  
soever is born of God, doth not commit  
sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and  
he cannot sin, because he is born of  
God, 1 Joh. 3. 9.* If there be any texts  
that seem to speak of apostatizing  
from an Evangelical righteousness, a  
righteousness of faith, and so cannot  
well be salved by this distinction, as  
that in *Heb. 10. 38.* and some others;  
it must be considered that suppositi-  
ons are made of things impossible as  
well as possible, yea and that even  
in the Scriptures themselves, as some  
have observed from *Gal. 1. 8.* *1 Cor.*  
*15. 14.* which texts do not at all im-  
ply what they suppose. I know in-  
deed that eternal salvation is ordi-  
narily entailed upon perseverance, and  
so is promised to us in Scripture, as  
it were conditionally, *Joh. 8. 31.* *If ye  
continue in my Word, then are ye my  
Disciples indeed, Col. 1. 21, 22, 23.*  
*you hath he reconciled in the body of  
his flesh through death to present you  
holy and unblameable and unprove-  
able in his sight, If ye continue in the  
faith, and be not moved away from*  
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the hope of the Gospel, &c. To the same purpose are those words, *He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved*, and Reve. 2. 26. *He that overcometh and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give, &c.* All which do strongly imply that there is no salvation but in a way of perseverance; and the words being laid down thus conditionally (especially the words first quoted) are indeed cautionary and quickning to the dull and sluggish minds of men, but do not necessarily imply any uncertainty or doubtfulness in the thing it self, no more than those words of the Apostle Peter, 1 Pet. 1. 10. compared with the latter end of the 12. verse where he doth affirm them to be *established in the truth*, and yet at the same time doth speak to them by way of caution and encouragement. There are many Texts that do seem to suppose the apostasie of men in a state of regeneration, but not one that doth assert it, that ever I could yet find; but they are almost without number that to my apprehension do more

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than seem to assert the contrary, viz. their *final perseverance* : of which perseverance we have also through the goodness of God thousands of instances ; but no man could ever yet produce one instance of the contrary, but by mere conjecture ; which conjectures , let them that make them see that they be neither *over-charitable* towards men, or *uncharitable* towards God. Wherefore I do conclude that what is said concerning *Heaven* and *Hell* in the Parable , (as to one branch of it ) is true of *grace* and *wickedness* ; *a gulf is fixed* , and they that would pass from God to sin and the devil cannot : not that there shall ever be in any a real and predominant desire so to pass, as I suppose I have already proved ; but it denotes the impossibility of the thing. It is equally impossible that a godly soul should fall from God and become an hater of him , fall from his love and image , and take upon him the image of the devil , as it was for *Lazarus* to quit *Abraham's* bosom for the flames of hell : the case seems to be the same, the



the former being the most reall Heaven, and the latter the truest Hell. True Religion is that holy fire which being once kindled in the soul from Heaven, never goes out; whereof the fire of the altar was but a faint and imperfect resemblance : It is as true in this respect of good men, as it is of wicked men in an other, *their fire never goes out.*

And here now we are presented with another great difference between true and counterfeit Religion. All counterfeit Religion will fade in time, though never so specious and flourishing ; All dew will pass away though some lye much longer than other ; All land-floods will fail, yea the flood of *Noah* at length dried up, though it were of many moneths duration : But this *well of water* which our Saviour speaks of here, will never utterly fail ; *cold Adversity* cannot freeze it up , *scorching prosperity* cannot dry it up : The upper springs of uncreated grace and goodness will evermore feed those nether springs of grace and holiness in the creature.

Though Heaven and earth pass away, yet shall the seed of God remain, *he that hath begun a good work, will certainly perform it*, Eph. 1. 6. Where the grace of God hath begotten a Divine principle and spirit of true Religion in a soul, there is the central force even of Heaven it self, still attracting; and carrying the soul in its motions thitherward, untill it have lodged it in the very bosome and heart of God. If any principle lower than true Religion do actuate a man, it will certainly wast and be exhausted; though it may carry him swiftly in a *rapid* motion, yet not in a *steady*; though it may carry him high, yet not quite through. A meteor that is exhaled from the earth by a forreign force, though it may mount high in appearance, and brave it in a blaze enough to be envyed by the poor twinkling stars, and to be admired by ordinary spectators, yet its fate is to fall down, and shamefully confess its base original. That Religion which men put on only for a *cloak*, will *wear out* and drop into rags, if it be not presently

sently thrown by as a garment out of fashion. You have read of the seeming righteousness of *Jehu* founded in ambition and cruelty, the piety and devotion of *Joash* grounded upon a good and vertuous education, the zeal of *Saul* for the worship of God, and his fat Sacrifices, growing upon a root of superstition, as *Samuel* that man of God interprets it, 1 *Sam.* 15. 22. and you have seen the shameful issue of all these dissemblers, and the stinking snuff in which all this candle-light Religion ended, very much unlike to that sun-light lustre of true and genuine goodness, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day, according to that elegant description which the spirit of God makes of it in the writings of *Solomon*, whose pen hath as much adorned this great truth, as his life hath blotted it, *Prov.* 4. 18. To this purpose I might fairly alleadge the frequent testimonies which the Holy Ghost in Scripture gives concerning such hypocritical and unprincipled professors that having no root they wither away in a scorching season,

that they are again entangled in the pollutions of the world and overcome, that like dogs they turn to their own vomit again, and like Sows wallow in the mire from which they had been washed, 2 Pet. 2. 20, 22. together with many others of the same nature: as also the prophecies that are made concerning them, that that which they seemed to have, shall be taken away from them, Luke 8. 18. that they shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, 2 Tim. 3. 9. that evil men and seducers (and of those, self-seducers are the worst) shall wax worse and worse, 2 Tim. 3. 13. with other places of the like nature. It were easie to record many histories of many men, especially great men, who have speedily, I had almost said disdainfully thrown off that semblance of humility, meekness, self-denial, justice and faithfulness which they had put on for a vizard during their probationarship for preferment, the better to accomplish their selfish designs, and to be possist of some base ends of their own.

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But yet I will not deny, but that a hypocrite may maintain a fair conformity to, and correspondence with the letter of the law of God, he may continue fair and specious to the very end of his life, yea perhaps may go to his grave undiscovered either to himself or any in the world besides. I believe many men have *lived* and *died* Pharisees, have never apostatized from that righteousness which they profess, but have persevered in their formality and hypocrisy to the last. But yet although that counterfeit righteousness and Religion may possibly not fade away, yet nevertheless being of an earthly and selfish constitution, it is transitory and fading, and if it were soundly assaulted and battered with persecutions and temptations, no doubt would actually vanish and disappear; on the other hand, the promise of God is pregnant and precious, Isa. 40. 31. *They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall walk and not faint.*

Take encouragement from hence all ye that love the Lord, go on in

the strength of God ; Be the more lively , by how much the more you are assured that this well of water shall spring up in you into everlasting life. Make this good use of this comfortable doctrine : will God indeed work in you , *both to will and to do* ? why then so much the rather *work out your own salvation* , according to the Apostle, *Phil. 2. 12.* will the Lord God *be with you* , will he *not fail you nor forsake you* , till you *have finished all your work* ? why then Be strong, and of good courage , and do , as good David infers and argues , *1 Chron. 28. 20.* Have you this hope, this firm ground of hope in the promise and goodness of God ? why then *purifie your selves as God is pure* ; according to the Apostle , *1 John 3. 3.* stop the mouths of those men that say *the Doctrine of perseverance is prejudicial to godliness* ; let them see , and be forced to acknowledge it , that the more a godly soul is assured of the infinite and unchangeable love and care of God towards him , the more is he winged with love and zeal, with speed mounting

ing up thither daily where he longs to arrive. They that understand the doctrine of perseverance, do also understand that they must accomplish it in a way of dutifull diligence, and watchfull willingness; and if any grow prophane and licentious, and apostatize from the way of righteousness which they have known, it is an evident argument to them that they are no Saints, and then what will the doctrine of the perseverance of Saints avail them?

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## CHAP. VII.

Religion considered in the consequent of Not thirsting : the phrase explained two wayes, both resulting into the same general truth, v. z. that divine grace gives a solid satisfaction to the soul. This Aphorisme confirmed by some Scriptures, and largely explained in six propositions. The first, that there is a raging thirst in every soul of man, after some ultimate and satisfactory good : The second, that every natural man thirsteth principally after happiness in the creature : The third, that no man can find that soul-fitting satisfaction in any creature enjoyment which every natural man principally seeketh therein; this prosecuted in two particulars : The fourth, that grace takes not away the souls thirst after happiness, but much enflames it; the reason assigned. The fifth, that the godly soul thirsteth no more after Rest in any worldly thing, but in God alone; this

this prosecuted in both the branches of it; in the former more largely, where enquiry is made how far a godly man may be said to thirst after the creature, and answered in four particulars: the latter briefly toucht upon. The sixth, that in the enjoyment of God the soul is at Rest; and this in a double sense, viz. so as that it is perfectly matcht with its object; two things noted for the clearing of this; Secondly, so satisfied as to have joy and pleasure in him; a double account given of that joy. The chapter expires in a passionate lamentation taken up over the levity and earthliness of Christian minds.

John 4. 14.

Whoſoever drinketh of the water that I ſhall give him ſhall never thirſt, &c.

**H**itherto we have taken a view of true Religion as it ſtands deſcribed in this pregnant text by its original, nature, and properties: we are now to conſider it in the certain . and

and genuine *consequent* of it ; and that is in one word Affirmatively , *satisfaction* ; or if you will, negatively , *not thirsting* : for so it is in our Saviours phrase , *whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.*

Whilest I address my self to the explication of this phrase , I suppose I need not be so exact and curious as to tell you in order , with a certain kind of Scholastical gravity , first , what is not , and then what is meant by it : For I presume no body will dream of a *corporeal* or gross kind of thirsting to be meant here. Grace doth no more quench the thirst of the body , than elementary water can relieve the panting of the soul. \* Nay he himself was subject to this gross kind of thirst ; who gave to others the water whereof if they drank, they should never thirst more. If it be understood of a *spiritual* thirst , yet I suppose I need not to tell you neither , that then it must not be understood *absolutely* : For it cannot possibly be that the thirst of a Soul should

be perfectly allayed, till all its faculties be filled up to the brim of their respective capacities; which will never be untill it be swallowed up in the infinite and unbounded Ocean of the supreme good.

But I conceive we may fairly come to the meaning of this phrase [*never thirst*] neither by *adding* or *distinguishing*.

*First*, Then let us supply the sentence thus, *whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst after any other water.* There is no worldly liquor can be so accommodated or attempered to the Palate as to give it an universal satisfaction, so as that a man should be perfectly mortified to all variety: But this Heavenly water which our Saviour treats of here, is so fitted to the Palate of spirits, and brings such satisfaction along with it, that the soul that is made to drink of it do's supersede its chase of all other delights, counts all other waters but a filthy and stinking puddle, thirsts no more after any other thing, neither through  
necessity

*necessity* nor for *variety*. The more the soul drinks of this water indeed, the more it thirsteth after fuller measures, and larger potions of the same, and do's not only suck in divine virtue and influences, but even longs to be it self suckt up in the divinity, as we shall see further in the procedure of this discourse: But its thirst after all created good, all the waters of the *Eastern* are hereby extinguished, or at least mastered and mortified. Or,

*Secondly*, By *distinguishing* upon thirst, the sense of the phrase will be clearly this, whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never be at a loss more, never be to seek any more, never be uncertain or unsatisfied as to his main happiness or supreme object, he shall not rove and range up and down the world in an untixedness and suspense any more, shall not run up and down to seek satisfaction and rest any more. From an internal unsatisfiedness of the body spring violent and restless motions and runnings up and down, by which thirst is contracted; so that by a  
*Metonymy*

*Metonymy* thirst comes to be used for *unsatisfiedness*, which is the remote cause of it; and by a *metaphor* the same phrase comes to be applyed to the soul. I suppose I am warranted by the sacred style thus to interpret, especially by the use and explication of the phrase in *Jer.* 2. 25. where the Prophet intimates that by thirst is to be meant a restless and discontented running up and down to seek satisfaction, *withhold thy foot from being unshod, and thy throat from thirst,* which two phrases are of the same importance, and signifie no more than *cease from gadding after your Idols;* and that this is the meaning of that thirsting appears by the answer that the wilfull and desperate people make in the sequel of the verse: For instead of saying, no, but we will thirst, they cry, *no, but after them will I go.* To thirst then, is in an unsatisfiedness and spiritual disquiet to range up and down seeking something wherein ultimately to acquiesce. And in this sense it is most true what our Lord here pronounceth, that *whosoever drinketh*  
of

*The not thirsting of a godly soul*

of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst. Of which thirst that famous Proclamation of our Saviours is to be understood, Joh. 7. 37. *If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink*; In which place also we must necessarily understand what is here exprest, that then he shall never thirst more.

It matters not much by which of these two ways we explain the phrase here of [ *not thirsting*; ] for according to either of them it will result into this theological maxime, viz. that,

*Divine grace or true Christian Religion gives a great and solid satisfaction to the soul that is principled with it.* This will appear plain, though we apply but one of each Testament of the holy Scriptures one text thereunto. I think it cannot reasonably be doubted but that the Prophecie and promise made in *Isa. 49. 10.* is to be performed unto believers in this present life, for so must the foregoing verses necessarily be understood, and there we have the doctrine expressly



Presly asserted, *They shall not hunger nor thirst, &c. for he that hath mercy on them, shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall be guide them.*

To which those words of our Saviour are parallel, Joh. 6. 35. *he that believeth on me shall never thirst :* which doctrine of his is yet amplified and enlarged in Joh. 7. 38. *he that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* What greater security from thirst can be desired, than that one should be led by springs of water ? yes, one may be led by the springs of water, and yet not be suffered to drink of them : well therefore to put all out of fear, the godly soul shall contain *within himself* a spring of water, he shall have rivers of living waters in himself ; and for his fuller security, these rivers shall be *ever flowing* too. It shall suffice at present, thus briefly to have established this conclusion. And now having lapt up the meaning of the words in this short position, I shall endeavour to unfold it in these six following propositions.

1. *There*

1. *There is a raging thirst in every soul of man after some ultimate and satisfactory good.* The God of nature hath implanted in every created nature a secret but powerful tendency towards a centre, which dictates arising out of the very constitution of it, it cannot disobey, until it cease to be such, and utterly apostatize from the state of its Creation. And the nobler any Being is, the more excellent is the object assigned unto it, and the more strong, and potent, and uncontrollable are its raptures and motions thereunto. Wherefore the soul of man must needs also have its own proper centre, which must be something superiour to, and more excellent than it self, able to fill up all its indigencies, to match all its capacities, to master all its cravings, and give a plenary and perfect satisfaction: which therefore can be no other than uncreated goodness, even God himself. It was not possible that God should make man of such faculties, and those of that capaciousness as we see them, and appoint any thing below himself,

himself, to be his ultimate happiness. Now although it be sadly true, that the faculties of the soul are miserably maimed, depraved, benighted, distorted, yet I do not see that the soul is utterly unnatured by sin, so as that any other thing should be obtruded upon it for its centre and happiness, than the same infinite good that was from the beginning such, or so as that its main and cardinal motions should be ultimately directed to any other than its natural and primitive object. The natural understanding hath not indeed any clear or distinct sight of this blessed object, but yet it retains a darker and more general apprehension of him, and may be said even in all its pursuits of other things, to be still *groping in the dark* after him: neither is it without some secret and latent sense of God, that the will of man chooseth or embraceth any thing for good. The Apostle sticks not to affirm that the idolatrous *Athenians* themselves did worship God, *Act. 17. 23.* though at that time indeed they *knew not what they*

shipped : their worship was secretly  
 and implicitly directed unto God,  
 and did ultimately resolve it self into  
 him, though they were not aware of  
 it ——— *whom ye ignorantly worship,*  
*Him declare I unto you ;* now that  
 he declared God unto them, appears  
 abundantly by the following verses,  
 what he sayes in point of worship,  
 the same me-thinks I may say in point  
 of love, trust, delight, dependance,  
 and apply it to all sorts of Idolaters,  
 as well as image-worshippers, and af-  
 firm that the covetous *idolater* even  
 when he most fondly hugs his bags,  
 and most firmly confideth in his  
 riches, doth ignorantly *love* and  
*trust in God ;* the *proud idolater*  
 in the highest acts of self-seeking,  
 and self-pleasing, doth ignorantly  
*admire and adore God ;* the *ambiti-*  
*ous idolater* even in the hottest  
 chase of secular glory, and popular  
 applause, doth ignorantly *pursue,*  
 and *advance God.* For that *Rest,*  
*Contentment, peace, happineſſ, satis-*  
*faction,* which these mistaken souls  
 do

do aim at, what is it other than God, though they attribute it to something else which cannot afford it, and so commit a real blasphemy? For they that do in their hearts and course of their lives ascribe a *Filling and satisfying* vertue to riches, pleasures or honours, do as *truly* though not so *loudly* blaspheme, as they who cryed out concerning the Calf of Gold, Exod. 32. 4. *These be thy Gods O Israel, &c.* And in this sense that I have been speaking, one may safely affirm that the most profest *Athiest* in the world doth *secretly* pursue the God whom he *openly* denies, whilest his will is catching at that which his judgement renounceth, and he allows that *deity* in his lusts which he will not own in Heaven. The Hypocrite *professes to know God, but in works denies him*; on the other hand the *Athiest*, though in words he deny God, yet in his works he *professeth him*: so natural and necessary it is for all men to acknowledge a Deity, though some are so brutish and be-

sorted,

sotted, as to confine him to their own bellies; of whom the Apostle speaks, Phil. 3. 19. *Whose God is their belly.* I say *natural*, for it is not only some few men of better education, and more contemplative complections that hunt after this invisible and satisfying good, but indeed the most vulgar souls retaining still the nature of souls, are perpetually catching at an ultimate happiness and satisfaction, and are secretly stung and tormented with the want of it. Certainly the motions of a soul are more strong and weighty than we are ordinary aware of; and I think one may safely conclude, that if there were no latent sense or natural science of God, the poor man could not spend the powers of his soul so intensely for the purchasing a little food and raiment for the body, nor the covetous man so insatiably thirst after houses and land, and a larger heap of refined earth: Did they not secretly imagine, I mean, some Contentment, Happiness, or satisfaction were to be drunk in together with these acquirements, they would

would seem to be but dry and insipid morsels to a soul; which ultimate happiness and satisfaction, as I said before, can be no other than God himself, whom these mistaken souls do ignorantly adore, and feel for in the dark. Neither let any one think that this ignorant and unwary pursuit of God can pass for Religion or be acceptable in the sight of God: for as it is impossible that ever any man should stumble into a happy state, without foresight and free choice, and be in it without any kind of sense or feeling of it, so neither can God accept the *blind* for sacrifice, or be pleased with any thing less than *reasonable service* from a reasonable creature. As the *Athenians* worshipping God by altars and images, are counted superstitious not devout, so the whole generation of gross and sensual souls admiring, loving, and ignorantly coveting after God in the pictures and images of true goodness are indeed truly blasphemers and idolaters, but religious they cannot be. We cannot excuse them from idolatry who



who direct their worship purposely to the true God, by or through images; much less sure can we be favourable to them who bestow their love, joy, confidence and delight ignorantly upon the supream and self-sufficient good by or through any created good, in which they, as far as they understand, do terminate their devotion. I do not say that all souls have a distinct discovery of the good they aime at, it is evident they have not; but yet the will of every man is secretly in chase of some ultimate end and happiness, and indeed in its eager tendencies outflies the understanding. All which mystery seems to be wrapt up in that short but pithy enquiry, which if it were a little otherwise modified, would be an excellent description of the natural soul, Psal. 4. 6. *Many say, who will shew us any good.* The nature of the object is set out in the word [good] the eagerness of the motion in the form of the question *who will shew us*, and the ignorance of the mover appears in the indeterminateness of this object, which is well explained

explained by the supply of the word  
[ *any* ] *who will shew us any good* ;  
And that this is the cry of every ra-  
tional soul is insinuated by the word  
[ *many* ] which *many* is also in Meter  
multiplied into *the greater sort* , and  
must indeed necessarily be extended  
unto *All*.

2. Every natural man thirsteth  
principally after happiness and satis-  
faction in the creature. The fall of  
the soul consisteth in its sinking it self  
into the *animal life* , and the business  
of every unrenewed soul is in one  
kind or other still to gratifie the same  
life. For although , as I have shewn ,  
God is in the bottome of these mens  
cares, and loves, and desires, and im-  
plicitly in all their thirstings , yet  
may well say of them as God says  
of the *Assyrian Monarch* , at what  
time he executed his pleasure in cor-  
recting his people Israel , *Isa. 10. 7.*  
*howbeit he meaneth not so , neither doth*  
*his heart think so* : God is not in all  
their thoughts, whilest they pursue that  
in the creature , which really none but  
God alone can be unto them. They

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do

do ultimately direct, as to their intention, all their cares, and covetings, and thirstings to some created object, all which are calculated for the *animal life*, the gratifying and accomplishing their own base *lusts*. This is very apparent in the idolatry of the Pagans, whose lusts gave being to their Gods; and so their Deities were as many as their concupiscences and filthy passions: To Sacrifice to their own *revenge* and *sensuality* under the names of *Mars*, *Bacchus* and *Venus*, what was it else but to proclaim to all the world, that they took the highest contentment and satisfaction in the fulfilling of such kind of lusts; this was unto them their God or supream felicity. The case is the same, though not so expressly and professedly with all carnal Christians, who although they profess the true God, yet in truth make him only a pander to their own lusts and base ends; though they *name the name of Christ*, yet in very deed Deifie their own passions, and sacrifice to the gratification of their animal powers. The Psalmist,

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as we have seen, determines the main end of all men to be τὸ ἀγαθόν, or good, Psal. 4. 6. but lest any man should be deceived in them, he presently tells us where this good was placed, ver. 7. viz. in *Corn and Wine*; by which we must understand the animal life, and whatsoever administers to the delight thereof. And certainly this will go far; for not only meats and drinks, venereal pleasures, gorgeous apparel, sumptuous buildings, splendid descent, honourable preferments, popular applause, inordinate recreations, and an unweildy bulk of earthly riches; but also orthodox opinions, philosophical, political, yea and Scholastical learning, fair professions, much pompous worship, yea and worship industriously void of pomp, specious performances, to which we may add the most seemly exercises of undaunted valour, unshaken constancy, unbribed justice, uninterrupted temperance, unsported chastity, and unlimited charity (if much giving may deserve so sacred a name) even all these, and as many more may serve only as fewell

for the rapacious fire of lust and self-love, to maintain and keep alive the mere *animal* or ( at most ) *logical* life, and are ordinarily designed as sacrifices to that which we significantly call *self*, in contradistinction from *God*. I need not here declame against *covetous*, *luxurious*, *ambitious* souls, the Apostle having so expressly prevented me by his plain and punctual arraignment of such men, *Col. 3. 5. Phil. 3. 19.* where he charges them with placing a deity in their bags and bellies: otherwise I durst appeal to all the world that are not parties, yea to the parties themselves whether it be *God* or themselves that these persons do intend to serve and please and gratifie, whether it be a real assimilation unto *God*, and the true honour of his name, or some lust or humour of *self-pleasing*, *self-advancing*, and *self-enjoying* that they sacrifice their cares and pains, and the main thirstings of their souls unto. I am confident it will be easily acknowledged that the *covetous*, *voluptuous*, and *ambitious*, do sacrifice

sice all they are, and do, to the latter ; but alas it is not yet agreed among men, who are such ; the *hypothesis* is granted, but the *thesis* is disputed ; and indeed this is no wonder neither, for it is as natural for the animal *self-life* to shift off guilt as it is to contract it, and the *pride* of the natural man is no less conspicuous in his wrongfull endeavours to seem innocent of what he is indeed guilty, than his *covetousness* and *voluptuousness* is apparent in the matter wherein his guilt consisteth. It is not only these and some few of the grossest and prophanest sort of souls, that are guilty in this kind which I have been describing, ( though they indeed are grossly and most visibly guilty, ) but verily the whole generation of meer animal men, who have no principle of divine life implanted in them, do spend all their *dayes*, bestow all their *pains*, and enjoy all their *comforts* in a real strain of blasphemy, from first to last. What a blasphemous kind of *Philosophy* was that which professedly placed th<sup>e</sup> supream good and

chiefest happiness of man in the fruition of pleasures ? And indeed all those kinds of *Philosophy*, which placed it elsewhere in things below God himself and the enjoyment of him, were no less prophane, though they may seem somewhat less beastly. For whether the *Epicureans* idolized their own senses, or the more exalted *Stoicks* deified their own faculty, placing their main contentment in their *self-sufficiency* and the perpetual serenity and tranquility of their own minds, it is too apparent that both the one and the other still moved within the narrow and low sphere of natural *self*, and grasped after a Deity in the poor dark shadows, and glimmering representatives of him. But I am speaking to *Christians* : and amongst these let no man tell me how orthodox his opinions, how pure and spiritual his forms, how numerous and specious his performances are, how rightly he pays his homage, and prays to one living God, by one living Mediator ; I will willingly allow, and do with delight observe these things where ever they are ;



are; but yet all this doth not denominate a Christian: For still that of the Apostle must hold good, Rom. 6. 16. *His servants ye are, to whom ye obey*; and I may adde by somewhat a like phraseology, *His children ye are whom ye resemble*, His creatures ye are (as far as you can make yourselves so) whose sufficiency and sovereignty is mostly magnified in your hearts, His worshippers ye are whom ye mostly love, trust in, delight in, depend upon; in a word, That is your God, which your soul doth mainly rest, and centre, and wrap up it self in. And (alas) how visibly dear and precious is the self-central life, which is so universally pampered, cherisht, served and sacrificed unto, besides the invisible and more spiritual oblations that are made thereunto. This is as true an Antichrist in the *mysterie*, as there is any *literal* Antichrist in the world; and of this one may as truly say, as St. John doth of the other, *all the world wandereth after the beast*. In a word then, who-

any thing that is not God, what that rich man in the Gospel said concerning his goods, *soul take thine ease in them, and be merry*; the same is an idolater and blasphemous: and this I affirm to be the language of every Apostate spirit, and unregenerate soul of man.

3. *No man can find that happiness, and soul-filling satisfaction in any creature-enjoyment, which every natural man principally seeketh therein.* Here are two things to be spoken to, viz. the enjoyments of men, or what they possess, and the satisfaction which the natural man seeketh in such possessions. For the first of these, I do not easily believe that ever any natural man had his fill of such possessions, I mean as to the quantity of them; he never had so much of them, as to be able freely to say, *It is enough.* The rational soul hath a strong and insatiable appetite, and wheresoever it imagineth its beloved prey to be found, and filling enjoyment to be had, it is exceeding greedy and rapacious; whether the same will ever be able to afford

afford it or no, it matters not. The animal life is that voracious idol, not like *Bell* in the story which seems only to eat up, but which doth really devour all the fat morsels, and sensual pleasures that are sacrificed unto it, and yet is not filled therewith. The whole employment of the natural man *quantum, quantum est*, is nothing else, but as the Apostle elegantly describes it, Rom. 13. 14. *To make provisions for the flesh, to fulfil it in the lusts thereof*: wherein yet to speak the truth, he loses his labour, for he sacrifices all to an unsatisfiable idol, and powers it into a gulf that hath neither bottom nor bounds, but swalloweth up all into its barren womb, and is rather made to thirst, than to cease from thirsting by all that is or can be administered unto it. I take that of *Solomon*, Eccles. 1. 8. to be a clear proof in general of what I affirm, *the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing*; the eye of man, as little as it is, is bigger than the whole conspicuous world, which although it may

be wearied with looking upon various objects, as the *English Annotators* observe upon these words, yet still desires new ones, and can drink them in without surfeiting: so that although the *acts* of the eye be scant and finite, yet the *lusts* of the eye seem to have a kind of infinity in them. And indeed by the unsatiableness of the eye and ear, is meant, the greediness or voracity of the flesh or animal life, as Mr. *Cartwright* hath well observed upon Prov. 27. 20. *Hell and destruction are never full, so the eyes of a man are never satisfied*; where by not being satisfied, is meant not having enough in quantity, as appears by the similitude in the former part of the verse. To the same sense he speaks, *Eccles. 4. 8. and 5. 10.* It would be endless to relate the monstrous and inexpleble gapings of covetous, ambitious, voluptuous, proud, vain-glorious minds after their respective idols. And indeed I need not descend to particular instances, for I suppose never any natural man could heartily say he had enough of riches, promotions,

*proved and explained.*

promotions, applause, sensual delights, eloquence, policy, prowess or victory, or of any other thing which is accommodated to the gratification of the flesh, no more than any godly soul sojourning upon earth could ever be yet able to say he had enough of God and eternal life. So that in a word, I know not how to apply any description to this insatiable and devouring principle more properly than that which the Prophet makes of hell, Isa. 5. 14. *She enlargeth her self and openeth her mouth without measure, and all glory, multitude and pomp descend into it.* I know there are of these men that pretend to have enough in quantity of these fleshly provisions; but I fear falsely and unjustly: For as for the rich and honourable of the earth, it is too evident that they are still climbing higher, and grasping after more, as the great *Alexander* is said to have whined after more worlds, when he conceited himself to be master of all this; as for the poorer and meaner sort of people who are as ready sometimes to

to lay claim to this vertue of thinking themselves to have enough, as any other people whatsoever, it is too manifest to a wise observer that it is not a real apprehension that they have enough, but either a low-ness and weakness of spirit arising from the meanness of their education, or a down right despair of ever getting more.

But be it imagined that the enjoyments of some natural men are enough in respect of quantity, yet still there is certainly wanting a true and sincere *satisfaction* of soul in such possessions; no man of all these finds that real happiness in those things which he so vehemently hunteth after. *Solomon* reduces all of pleasure and contentment that is to be found in multiplyed riches to a very pittifull *summa totalis*, Eccles. 5. 11. *what good is there to the owners thereof, save the beholding of them with their eyes?* And alas what is the sight of the eye to the satisfaction of the soul! The whole consplicable world is utterly too scant, for and incommensurate to the

the wide and deep capacity of an immortal spirit ; so that the finite can no more satisfy, than a less can fill a greater, which is surely impossible. Whatever is in the world out of God is described by the Prophet, *Isa. 55. 2* to be *not bread*, there is the *unsuitableness* ; and *not to satisfy*, there is the *insufficiency* of it as to the soul of man : on the other hand this soul of man is so vastly capacious, that though it be also never so greedy and rapacious, *snatching on the right hand and catching on the left hand* as the Prophet describes the famelick people, *Isai. 9. 20.* yet still it is *hungry and unsatisfied*. Which ravenous and insatiable appetite of the sensual soul, is elegantly described by the Prophet in the similitude of an *whorish Woman*, who prostituted her self to all comers, and *multiplyeth her fornications*, yet is *unsatiable, is not, cannot be satisfied* ; *Ezek. 16. 28, 29.* The soul may indeed feed, yea and surfeit upon, but it can never satisfy it self from it self, or from any created good ; nothing can ultimately determine and

centre



centre the motions of a soul , but something superiour to its own essence ; which whilst it misses of, it is as it were divided against it self, perpetually struggling and fluctuating, and travelling in pangs with some new design or other to be at rest ; like the old *Lioness* in the parable of *Ezekiel*, breeding up one whelp after an other , to be a Lion wherein to confide, but disappointed in all ; or like the poor discontented butterflye lighting and catching everywhere, but sticking nowhere, adoring something for a God to day which it will be ready to fling into the fire to morrow, after their manner of creating Gods to themselves, whom the Poet brings in saying — *Hodie mihi Jupiter esto, Cras mihi truncus eris, ficulus, inutile lignum.*

Neither the quantity , variety or duration of any created objects can possibly fill up that large and noble capacity wherewith God hath endued the rational soul, but having departed from its centre and not knowing how to return to its originall,

nall, it wanders up and down as it were in a wilderness, and having an imperfect glimmering sight at something better than what it self as yet either is or hath, but not being able to attain to it, is miserably tormented, even as a man in a thirst which he cannot quench, yea the more he runs up and down to seek water, the more is his thirst encreased whilest he misses of it; so this distempered and distracted soul, whilest it seeks to quench its thirst at the *creature-cistern*, do's but inflame it, and in a continuall pursuit of rest becomes most *restless*. That every unregenerate soul is in such a distressed, weary, restless state as I have been discribing, appears most evidently by those famous Gospel Proclamations; one in Isa. 55. 1, 3. *Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters;* where by the thirst-ers, are meant those unfixed, unsatisfied souls, as appears by the second verse; the other in Matth. 11. 28. *Come unto me all ye that labour, &c.* where the promise of giving rest do's plainly imply the *restless* state of the persons

persons invited. There is a certain horror and anguish in sin and wickedness; even long before it be swallowed up in hell; a certain vanity and vexation folded up in all earthly enjoyments, though the same do not alwayes sting and pierce the soul alike: so true is that famous aphorism of the Prophet Isaiah, *There is no peace to the wicked.*

4. *Grace takes not away this thirst of the soul after happiness and plenary satisfaction.* Love and desire, and a tendency towards blessedness, are so woven into the nature of the soul, and inlaid in the very essence of it, that she cannot possibly put them off, however it is the work of grace to change and rectifie them, as we shall see under the next head: The soul of man is *αἴλον καὶ ἀσώματον πῦρ* a kind of immaterial fire, an inextinguishable activity, alwayes necessarily catching at some object or other, in conjunction with which she thinks to be happy: and therefore if she be rent from her self and the world, and be mortified to the love of fleshly  
and

and animal lusts, she will certainly cleave to some higher and more excellent object; as will more clearly appear by and by. Grace do's not stupifie the soul as to its sense of its own indigency and poverty; but indeed makes it more abundantly sensible and importunate. There are more strong motions and more powerful appetites in the godly soul towards its true and proper happiness, than in the ungodly and wicked. For the understanding of the regenerate soul is so enlightened, as that it doth present the will with an amiable and satisfactory object, which object therefore bring more distinctly and perfectly apprehended, doth also apprehend or lay hold upon the soul, and attract her unto it self. *Oculi sunt in amore duces* is most true of the eye of the soul, I mean the *understanding*; that first affects the heart with *amorous* passions. The first and fundamental error and mistake of the rational soul seems to lye here even in the understanding; here lyes the very root of the degenerate souls distemper; and

and if this were thoroughly restored and healed, so as to present the will with pure and proper ideas and representations of God, it might be hoped that this ductile faculty would not be long before it clave unto him entirely; nay, it may be doubted whether it could possibly resist the dictates of it. Now in the regenerate soul, this faculty is repaired; yea, I may say, that the spirit of Regeneration first of all spreads it self upon the understanding, and awakens in it a sense of self-indigency, and of the perfect, all-sufficient, suitable, and satisfactory fullness of God, in whom it sees all beauties, sweetness, and loveliness in an infinitely ineffable manner wrapt up and contained; which will be so far from allaying the essential thirst of the soul, and stifling its eager gaspings, that it must needs give a mighty edge and ardour to its inclinations, and put it upon a more bold and earnest contention towards this glorious object, and charm the whole soul into the very arms of God. Therefore *not thirsting* in the Text, must not be understood

stood absolutely, as if grace did utterly extinguish the natural activities of the soul, and finish its propensions: But the regenerate and gracious soul doth not thirst in such sense, as thirst implies a *want of a suitable good*, or dissatisfaction, or includes *torment* properly so called. In this notion of thirst, grace doth indeed quench it, as I intimated in the beginning of this discourse, and will further appear in the procedure of it. But as to this most essential thirst, this natural *hunger*, or vengeance of the soul after a central rest and happiness, the same is so far from being extinguished or moderated, either by divine grace, that it is hugely improved, and mightily inflamed thereby. I suppose I need not stay upon so popular a Theme, and so acknowledged a subject; therefore I will but present you with the instances of holy *David* in the Old Testament, and gracious *Paul* in the New, and so quit this head. I need not, I suppose, magnifie the holy and divine frame of *David's* spirit by any balbutient Rhetorick of mine;  
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God himself hath given the amplest testimony, and fairest character of him that I remember to have been at any time given of any man, when he owns him for *a man after his own heart*: And what a longing, thirsting soul this was, I need do no more to demonstrate, than to turn you to some passages and professions of his own in his devout Psalms; such as *Psal. 42. 12. 63. 1. 143. 6.* Where he borrows the strongest inclinations that are to be found in the whole Creation, to represent the devout ardors of his own soul; *As the Hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty Land, where no water is. I stretch forth my hands unto thee, my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty Land: Yea he seems like one that would swoon away for very longing; Hear me speedily, O Lord, my spirit faileth; hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit: I lift my soul*  
unto



unto thee. *I flee unto thee*, &c. The very same temper you will find in holy Paul, that chosen vessel of God, if you peruse his Epistles, in all which you will meet with devout and strong breathings of the same kind; particularly, *Phil. 3. 11, 12, 13, 14*. Where he seems to be so thirsty after a state of heavenly perfection, that he longs after (if I mistake not the meaning of the 11. verse) something that yet he knows he cannot arrive at whilst he is in this world, even the *resurrection of the dead*, or such a perfect state of purity and holiness, as belongs to the *children of the resurrection*.

5. *The godly soul thirsteth no more after happiness in any creature, nor rests in any worldly thing, but in God alone*. This particular consists also of two branches: the former and negative part whereof seems to me to contain in it the scope and meaning of our Saviour, in these words which I am now interpreting. We have already seen, that every unsanctified soul is restless, and craving, wavering, unsatisfied, inconstant to it self, and its choice:

choice; By reason of this natural activity, it is alwaies spending it self in restless and giddy motions, as we observed under the first head of this discourse; but by reason of its ignorance, and *unacquaintedness* with the one, Supreme and All-sufficient good, and the *multiplicity* of lower ends and objects, is miserably distracted, and doth necessarily grapple with inevitable disturbances, in a continual unsteadiness, putting forth it self now towards one thing, anon to another, courting every thing, but matching with nothing, like a *fickle Lover* that is alwaies enamoured with the last feature he saw, or a *greedy Merchant*, that being equally in love with the pleasure of being at home, and the profit of being abroad, can stay long no where with any content, but has alwaies most mind of the place where he is not, as he confesses of himself in the Poet,

*Romæ Tybur amo ventosus, Tybure Romam.*

The description that our Lord gives  
of

of the unclean spirit that is *gone out of a man*, Matth. 12. 43. seems very aptly to agree to that unclean spirit that is *in man*, that being departed from God its proper rest and *habitation*, walketh thorough *dry and desert places*, I mean empty and unsatisfying creature-enjoyments, seeking rest, but finding none. It was an accidental affliction of believers, but it is the natural and necessary affliction of every unbelieving and wicked soul to wander up and down the world destitute, afflicted, tormented. Sinful self is so multiform; and that one *root* the *animal life* has such a world of *branches*, that it is impossible to administer due nourishment to them all; and yet they are all importunate and greedy *suckers* too: so that he must needs have a difficult task, and a painful Province that is constrained to attend upon so many, so different, and yet all of them so impatient, and imperious Masters. But I shall lose ground by thus going backward to what I spoke to under the second head, except I can make this advantage of it, to enforce that which I was

was going to speak of, with the greater strength and clearer evidence. The case standing thus with the unregenerate soul, as we have seen in this short review, I now say that divine grace allays the multifarious thirst of the soul after other waters, filthy puddles, of which it could never yet drink deep; or if it drunk never so deep, could not be quenched; it determines the soul to one object, which before was rent in pieces amongst many. It do's not destroy any of the natural powers, nor dry up the innate vigour of the soul, as I made evident under the last head, but it takes it off from the chase of all inferiour ends, and inadequate objects, setting it upon a vehement pursuit of, and causing it to spend all those its powers not less vigorously, but far more rationally and satisfactorily upon that *objectum par amori*, the infinitely-amiable and self-sufficient God. When the soul hath once met with this glorious object, is once mastered with this supreme good, is by divine grace amplified and enlarged, it cannot with  
any

any ease stretch it self upon the creature any more ; that is too scant and insufficient for it. Certainly the soul that understands its own original, nature, and capacity, and once comes to view it self in God, will see it self too large to be *bounded* by the narrow confines of self, or any creature, and too free to be *bound* down and chained to any earthly object whatever. The world indeed may, yea and will labour to take off the soul ; *What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved*, that thou art so fond of him ? *Are not Abana and Pharpar Rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel ?* Be content, here is *hay and provender*, stay with me this night, let us dally and make merry together a little longer. But these *Syrenian songs* are sung to a deaf ear, they cannot inchant the wise and devout soul, that hath her senses rightly awakened, and *exercised to discern between good and evil* : Oh no, *I am sick of love*, and sick of every thing that keeps me from my Beloved ; and therefore however you may go about to defile me through

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fraud or force, through surprize or violence, yet I will not prostitute my self unto you. The gracious soul hath now discovered the most beautiful, perfect, and lovely object, even him whose name is *Love* it self; which glorious vision hath so blasted and withered the choicest flowers in natures Garden, that they have now no more form nor comeliness, beauty or fragrancy, as to deserve to be desired; she hath tasted the pure and perfect sweetness of the *fountain*, which hath so imbittered all *cistern-waters*, that she finds no more thirstings in her self after them; which is that which our Saviour promiseth here—— *shall never thirst*. A godly soul cannot possibly be put off with any thing short of God; give him his God or he dies: Give him never so much fair usage in the world, never so much of earthly accommodations, they are not accommodated to his wants and thirsts, if they have not that God in them, out of whom all worldly pleasures are even irksome and unpleasant, and all fleshly ease is tedious and painful: Creature-

Creature-employments are but a wearisome drudgery to a soul that is acquainted with the work of Angels; and creature-enjoyments in themselves considered, are very insignificant, if not burdensome to a mind that is feelingly possess'd of the chiefest good.

But here it will be seasonable to take into consideration, a grand enquiry, *viz.* whether a godly man may not be said in some sense to desire the creature, and how far such a person may be said to thirst after it. This I shall speak to as briefly, and yet as clearly as I can, in these four following particulars.

1. *All godly souls are not equally mortified to worldly loves, nor equally zealous and importunate lovers of God.* This is so evident *de facto*, that I need not insist upon it. *Abraham* seems to have been as much higher and nobler in spirit than his Brother *Lot*, as *Lot* was more excellent than one of the ordinary Sons of *Adam*, I had almost said, than one of the *Sodomites* amongst whom he dwelled. The one



leaves all the pleasant and plentiful accommodations of his native Country, at the very first call going out, *not knowing whither he went*, only relying upon the gracious guidance of him whom he followed; he seems to reckon all soils alike for his sojourning, and the whole habitable world as his own City and home; as appears by his readiness to break up house, and quit his present habitation; rather than interfere with the conveniences of his Nephew, *Gen. 13. 9.* The other preferred a fruitful soil before a faithfull society, and so in some sense his body before his soul; and yet as if it had not been enough to make so unadvised a choice, he rests in it too; yea though he was so severely reprov'd by the captivity that befell him there, whereby he was not so much called, as indeed carry'd away thence; yet this will not loosen him from his earthly conveniences, but he returns to *Sodom*, and from thence he will not part till he be fired out, nay and then also it is with much *lingring* and loathsomeness, *Gen. 19. 16.* It is evident, I say,

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say, *de facto*, both from this, and many other instances which I purposely omit, that it is so, that all godly souls are not equally careless of these earthly things, nor carried out with equal ardour and intemperance (as I may call it) towards the supreme and most glorious object, of which I can assign no fitter reason than this, because they are not all equally godly. For,

2. *So far as grace prevails, and Religion in the power of it acteth the soul in which it is planted, so far earthly loves decay and wither.* For these two cannot stand together, *mutuo se pellunt*, the love of the world is inconsistent with the love of God, 1 *Joh.* 1. 15. *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* So far as any soul is sanctified, so far is it mortified also to all creature-enjoyments, to all things that are only fuel for the animal life, honour, ease, victory, plenty, liberty, relations, recreations, all the entertainments and delights in this lower life, yea and this very life it selfe. Earthly and heavenly loves are to each other as the two

ends of a pair of ballances (save that they are never found equally poizing) as the one rises, the other falls; just so much advantage as this gets, that loses. The more the sensual and self-central life thrives and prospers, and the creature is exalted, the more Religion and the divine life fainteth and flaggeth in the soul: And so certainly on the other hand, the more divine grace prevails, and the divine life flourisheth in the soul, the more all earthly objects wither away and lose their beauty, and the soul cooleth and languisheth as to its love and desire of them. So far as a regenerate soul is unregenerate, so far she will be busling after other Lovers: which regeneration will not, I conceive, be thoroughly perfected, and therefore these lustings not utterly extinguished, till this mortal put on immortality; or as the Apostle speaks elsewhere, till *mortality be swallowed up of life.*

3. For the preventing of rash and uncharitable judging, I do affirm, that *divine and holy souls are oft mistaken by them that behold their ordinary converse*  
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*and actions in the body :* They are thought sometimes to take pleasure in the creature, and to gratifie the flesh, when indeed it is no such matter ; but they take pleasure in the stamp of God, or the evidence of his fatherly love, which they contemplate therein, and do perhaps most of all serve a spiritual end, and an eternal design in those very actions which others may think are calculated for the gratification of the animal life, and the service of the flesh. Let not the purblind world, nor the self-befriending hypocrite be judge, and it will appear that the truly godly soul counts nothing savoury to it self, but what represents, teaches, exhibits something of God, nothing pleasant but what hath a tendency to him : Such a soul doth not *feel* himself in his highest raptures, doth not *tast* himself in his noblest accomplishments, doth not *seek* himself in his most excellent performances ; be not mistaken, he doth not so much thirst after long life, riches, friends, liberties, as indeed after God in them all ; these all signifie

nothing to him, if they bring him not nearer to his God, and conduce to his real and spiritual happiness. Yea possibly in his most suspicious actions, and those that seem most alien from Religion, and most designed to please the flesh, he may be highly spiritual and pure: So was our blessed Saviour we know even in his conversing with scandalous sinners, eating and drinking with Publicans and notorious offenders, however he was traduced by a proud and hypocritical generation; and so I doubt not is many a good Christian, according to his measure, pure as Christ was pure. When a painted Hypocrite, who can guess at the temper of others, no other way but by what he finds in himself, and by what he should be and do, if he were under the same circumstances, comes to be Judge of the actions or disposition of one who is transformed into the Image of the divine freedom and benignity, you may easily imagine what a perverse sentence he will pass. It needs not seem very strange, methinks, in spirituals, no more than it

is in corporals, that the most sound and healthful constitutions should (upon a lawful call) adventure themselves further than the crazy, and sickly, and familiarly converse with and handle, yea and make good work with those briars and thorns, which would prove a snare, or a wound, or a pricking temptation to others. If it were possible for any man to arrive at the purity and perfection of his Saviour, and his firm and immoveable radication in true goodness, he would find himself so wholly dead to sin, and all temptations, and motions thereunto, that he would be able to dare to walk upon the most boisterous waves, without fear of being swallowed up in them, and to take up in his hands the most venomous Serpent, not dreading the sting of it. However, the apprehensions and actions of more perfect and more refined souls are not rashly to be judged; for they may easily be mistaken, either by the *unhallowed hypocrite*, or the more imperfect and *impotent Saint*.

4. To answer yet more fully, I do

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affirm,

affirm, that no truly religious soul in the world doth so thirst after the creature, as to place his main happiness in it, or to seek satisfaction from it. However all holy souls may not be alike weaned from the world, nor equally loving of God, however the affections and actions of some may really be, and of others may seem to be too gross and fleshly, yet no one of all these, in whom this new and divine life is indeed found, doth erect a *self-supremacy* in his own soul, nor take his full and compleat rest and happiness to consist in any creature-communion whatsoever. Surely this of *not thirsting*, is so far a consequent of true Religion, as that no religious soul in the world can be content to exchange the presence of God, and acquaintance with him for any thing, for all things besides; or if you will, plainly thus, no such person could be content, no not for all the world, (the glory of Heaven not excepted, if it may be supposed) to be wicked and ungodly: So that by thirstings here, must not be meant some weak wishings and fainter propensions



propensions of the soul towards created objects (for certainly there is no soul found in a body of earth, in which these are not found) no nor yet some more lively and stronger strugglings after them (how strong they may be in a good Christian, and yet predominated over by grace, we cannot punctually determine;) but by thirsting, here must be meant the most quick and powerful breathings, the highest and strongest ardensities, the predominant and victorious motions and desires of the soul, which do as it were fold up the whole soul, and lead all its powers and faculties with it into a grateful captivity. Thus shall he thirst no more, who hath once drunk of these waters which flow forth from the presence of the Lord of life, and which the blessed Redeemer of the world is here said to give.

But (which is the latter branch of this particular) this inspired soul which we have been describing, thirsteth after his happiness in God alone, that is, in the enjoyment of him. We have already seen that grace do's not destroy

destroy the natural and essential longings of the soul after a satisfactory good, but rather enhance them, and that the godly soul is most thirsty of all, but not with a creature-thirst, as is before proved; it remains then that his thirsting after rest and happiness is terminated upon God alone. And so indeed it appears in the instances of holy men recorded in the holy Writ, which I have under the last head spoke something to, and so partly prevented my self. But unto those passages and professions which I quoted out of *Psal. 42. 1, 2, &c.* You may add such, as *Psal. 4. 6.* which is the voice of every godly soul; *Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us: Psal. 39. 6, 7. Surely every man walketh in a vain shew; surely they are disquieted in vain; he heapeth up riches, &c. And now Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee:* Where you have the different seekings and centrings of the ungodly, and of the godly soul elegantly described. Lastly, you may in *Psal. 73. 25.* again view the term or end of the godly man's ambition; *Whom have*

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have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee! Which translation of the words do lively set out the godly man's end, and aim, and object, and happiness, and indeed his all: or if we translate (perhaps more fitly) with *Mollerus*, yet they afford us the same doctrine, *Who will give me to be in Heaven, and with thee? on earth I desire nothing.*

And thus have we dispatcht the fifth Proposition, *viz.* that the godly soul thirsteth no more after happiness in any creature, or rest in any worldly thing; and come to the sixth and last particular designed for the explication of this *not thirsting* of the religious soul, which is this.

*In the enjoyment of God this soul is at rest, is fully satisfied.* I do not mean so satisfied, as not to thirst after any more of him, as I have often hinted; but so satisfied, as to be perfectly matcht with an object transcendently adequate to all its faculties, and their respective capacities; and so satisfied, as to have peace and joy, and triumph in him. These

two I will speak something to distinctly, and so pass on.

Now for the better understanding of the first of these, it should be noted, *That the reasonable soul, and the faculties of it are of a vast, large, and noble capacity.* - It is universally granted by all, that are not *Sadduces*, that the capacity of *Angels* is very great and noble; and that the condition of the humane soul is not much inferiour to it, may, I think, be gathered from the Psalmist's words, Psal. 8. 5. *Thou hast made him a little lower than the Angels:* Which words, although the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* applies to Christ, Heb. 2. 9. (And indeed, they have a marvelous aptness to him, according to the *Dutch Translation*, which runs thus, *We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour, who was become a little lesser than the Angels by reason of the sufferings of death: that he should by the grace of God, &c.*) Yet I see nothing hindring, but that they may be well applied to the excellent condition of man by creation; especially considering that many other passages of  
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the Old Testament have a double aspect, one more ordinary and obvious, which was most clearly understood by the Prophet that wrote them; the other more obtruse, and *mysterious*, principally intended by that spirit that inspired him, and only to be understood by the revelation of the same spirit: Such are those passages, I conceive, which are found in *Isa.* 7. 14. *Hosea* 11. 1. Interpreted by the Evangelist, *Mat.* 1. 23. and 2. 15. As also *Jer.* 31. 15. with many more. But, however it goes with that Text, and whether or no the souls of men be so near of kindred to the Angels, as to their comprehensions; yet that they are capable of a most noble and excellent happiness, and much allied to God himself, doth appear from such texts of Scripture, as do require them to be *holy, as God is holy*, to be *perfect, as their heavenly Father is perfect*. Neither need it seem to any incredible, that the rational soul should be so capacious; for we are no more to judge of the Angelical temper, and noble actings of the separated soul, by what we

*The not thirsting of a godly soul*

we see it to be and do in this body of flesh, than one can judge of the prowess and puissance of a renowned Warriour in the head of an Army, by what we discern in him when he lyes bound in Chains, or of the power and splendor of the Sun, by what we discern of it when it is eclipsed, or miserably beclouded; or if you will, no more than we can judge of a man, by the imperfections, balbutoncies, and tirubancies of his childhood: For so the Apostle Paul seems to state the case, 1 Cor. 13. 10, 11. Plainly implying, that the present and future condition of the soul, is comparable to the minority and adult state of a man; as if he had said, the soul in its future and separate state will act as much nobler than what it doth now; as the soul of the wisest and discreetest man in the world acteth more nobly than what it did when he was a child: Yea, and what is still more to our present purpose, he seems clearly to intimate in the *twelfth verse*, that this improvement shall happen, not so much by the more evident propounding of the  
*object,*

object, as by the more ample illumination and corroboration of the faculties. In the next place, it will be easily inferred, that all created good is too scant and insufficient for this capacious spirit of man; too short a bed to stretch it self upon; nay, it cannot contract it self so as to be accommodated to any worldly good, without pain and anguish. From both which, it will be naturally and necessarily concluded, that God alone is that adequate object which can match the soul of man, and satisfy it, as being infinitely superiour and transcendent to it. The enjoyment of God is that *ultimate end*, and *perfect good*, that is only able to fix the spirit of man, which otherwise, not meeting with its match, would be tossed to and fro, and labour under perpetual disquietness, and restless fluctuations. God is that Almighty goodness and sweetness, who alone is able to draw out all the appetites of the soul unto himself, satisfy all its cravings, charm all its restless motions, and cause all its faculties in the purest and most complacential manner, to conspire



conspire together how to give up themselves wholly and entirely to himself.

*Secondly*, From this conjunction with omnipotent goodness, ariseth pure peace, yea joy and triumph to the religious soul. For the clearer understanding of this, I should premise, what some have wisely observed, that *there is a natural congruity between God and the soul*, she being a *spiritual substance*, and he being a *spiritual good*, only suitable unto her. This seems to be evident by experience; for we see how difficult, I had almost said impossible it is, utterly to eradicate and extinguish all sense of vertue and goodness out of the soul of man; to which purpose I think our Divines generally speak, when they allow of some *holy relicks*, something of the Image of God remaining in the most degenerate souls, however all men have reduced the same to a very poor and inconsiderable *spark*, and many have raked that very spark under *ashes* too, and *imprisoned* that remainder of truth in *unrighteousness*, living according to those

those unnatural and forreign principles and conceptions that they have unhappily drunk in. Hence it is, I suppose, that sin and wickedness are so often stiled the *defilement* of the soul: Now we know, that whatsoever defileth, is adventitious and improper; And hence it is that sin many times stings and wounds the consciences of those that take most pleasure in it, namely, being so perfectly contrary to this noble and inbred sense of the soul; allowing then this natural *sympathy* that the soul of man hath with its Creator; it will be easie to give a *Philosophical* account of that *peace, joy and triumph*, of which the soul must needs be possesst, or rather indeed transported with, that finds and feels it self in conjunction with its centre, and in the dearest embraces of its Creator. It need not seem strange that the soul should mightily congratulate it self in its arrival at its own haven; nay, it were strange if it should not dissolve into secret joy and pleasure in the hearty entertainments of so blessed and proper a guest as God is unto it;

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Nay, indeed it were unreasonable to imagine, that the conjunction of so noble and discerning faculties, with so perfect and proper an object, should not beget the truest and sincerest delight and pleasure imaginable. The delight of an earthly and sensual mind, are filthy and dreggy, in comparison of these pleasures of the refined and purified soul, which must needs live most gracefully, triumphantly, and deliciously, when it converseth with God most intimately. Certainly if there be any innocent and well-natur'd *self-feeling*, or *self-pleasing* in the world, this is it; though indeed, to speak truly, it deserves a better name. It cannot be but that a godly soul, being in its right senses, should taste a sweetness in these pure and divine accomplishments wrought in it by the eternal Spirit of Righteousness; which self-pleasing is no more blamable, than that natural pleasure, which every creature finds in the enjoyment of that which is most aptly accommodated to its necessities, and most perfective of its happiness; which pleasure

sure, I say, ariseth in the soul from its sensible union with God in the spirit, and enjoyment of him: By which enjoyment of God, you will easily perceive that I do not mean the bare pardon of sin, or an abstract Justification; (for this is not the attainment that is perfective of the soul, neither could it alone (if we could suppose it alone) fill up the capacities of the soul, or make it happy, however the rapturous joys of the unprincipled hypocrite spring principally from the opinion and false apprehension of this, which indeed I take to be a notable (though not infallible) sign of a mercenary, low-spirited, and fleshly-minded Christian:) but by it I mean the souls being really regenerated into the Image of God, consisting in knowledge, Righteousness and Holiness, and her implantation into the root Christ Jesus, by which she partakes of his divine life, power, and spirit.

And yet besides this, I conceive there is a more Theological account to be given of these joys and pleasures which the renewed soul doth so plentifully

tifully reap, upon her return to God, from whom she had so long straggled by sin and wickedness. For the *God of hope filleth the godly soul with all peace and joy in believing*, Rom. 15. 13. Christ doth on purpose speak words to the hearts of his Disciples, that their joy may be full, Joh. 15. 11. But whether the most benign and gracious Father of spirits doth immediately from himself inspire the holy soul, with divine joys and pleasures, kindled, as I may say, with nothing but his own breath; or whether he bring them to his *holy Mountain*, and into his *house of prayer*, and by that or any other the like means make them joyful, and of glad heart, as in the day of a solemn festival, as he hath promised to do, *Isa. 56. 7.* and *Isa. 25. 6.* However it be, I say, sure it is that he frequently puts a gladness into their hearts beyond that of the Harvest or the Vintage, *Psal. 4. 7.* and makes them to rejoyce with joy *unspeakable and full of glory*, 1 Pet. 1. 8.

Having now unfolded the meaning of the gracious soul's not thirsting any more,

more, I should pass to the last thing contained in the Text ; but finding my self oppress'd in my spirit, by the consideration of this necessary consequent of true Religion, when I compare the temper of Christians with it (*οἱ τοὺν βεγτοὶ εἰσι*) I must crave leave to stay a little and breathe. And what shall I *breathe* but a sad and bitter complaint over that low, earthly, selfish, greedy spirit, which actuateth the world at this day, yea and the generality of Professors of that sacred Religion, which we call *Christianity*. Alas! what a company of thieves and murderers, I mean, base and sensual loves and lusts, lodge in those very souls, who would be taken for Temples consecrated to the name, and honour, and inhabitation of the eternal God, the spirit of Truth and Holiness. Oh what pitty is it that the precious souls of men, yea and of Christians, the best of men, that are all capable of so glorious liberty, so high and honourable a happiness, should be bound down under such vile and sordid lusts, feeding upon dust and gravel to whom the  
*hidden*

*bidden Mannah* is freely offered, and God himself is ready to become a banquet! And oh what a shame is it for those who profess themselves *children of God, Disciples of the most holy Jesus, and Heirs of his pure and undetiled Kingdom of Heaven*; for these, I say, willingly and greedily to roll themselves in filthy and brutish sensualities, to set up that on high in their souls, which was made to be under their bodies, and so to love and live as if they studied to have no affinity at all, but would be as unlike as they could to that God, and Redeemer, and unfit for that inheritance! How often shall it be protested to the Christian world, by men of the greatest devotion and seriousness, that it is utterly mad, and perfectly vain to dream of *entring into the Kingdom of Heaven hereafter, except the Kingdom of Heaven enter into our souls during their union with these bodies*? How long shall the Son of God, who came into the world on purpose to be the most glorious example of true and divine purity, exact and perfect self-denial, and



and mortification, how long shall he  
lye by in his word, as an antiquated  
pattern only cut out for the Apostoli-  
cal ages of the world, and only suited  
to some few morose and melancholick  
men! Is it not a monstrous spectacle,  
and to be hift out of the world with  
the greatest indignation, a covetous,  
voluptuous, ambitious, sensual Saint?  
With what face can we pretend to true  
Religion, or a feeling acquaintance  
with God, and the things of his  
personall service and Kingdom,  
whilst the continual *bleatings* and  
*lowings* of our souls after created  
good do bewray us so manifestly, and  
proclame before all the world, that the  
*beast*, the brutish life, is still power-  
ful in us? *If ye seek me*, saith Christ to  
his followers, as well as he did once to  
his persecutors, *then let these go*; let  
go the hold of these earthly objects,  
let vanish this worldly joys and toys,  
*with-hold your throat from thirst*, and  
*your feet from being unshod*, and come  
follow me only, and ye shall have  
treasure in Heaven; for he that will  
not deny all for me, is not worthy of  
O me.

me. But *O curvæ in terras anima, &c.*  
 Ah sad and dreadfull fall, that hath so  
 miserably cramp't this royal off-spring,  
 and made the *Kings Son* to be a lame  
*Mephibosheth* ! Ah doleful Apostasie !  
 How are the Sons of the morning be-  
 come Brats of darkness, and the heirs  
 of Heaven, vassals and drudges to  
 earth ! How is the *Kings Daughter*  
 unequally yoked with a churlish  
*Nabal*, that continually checketh  
 her more divine and generous moti-  
 ons ! How unhappily art thou matcht,  
*O my soul* ! And yet ( alas ) I see it is  
 too properly a marriage, for thou hast  
 clean forgotten *thine own people*, and  
*thy Fathers house*. Take up, oh take  
 up a lamentation thou Virgin, Daugh-  
 ter of the God of *Zion* : Sometimes in-  
 deed a Virgin, but now ( alas ) no  
 longer a Virgin, but miserably mar-  
 ried to an unworthy mate, that can  
 never be able to *match* thy faculties,  
 nor *maintain* thee according to the  
 grandeur of thy birth, or the necessa-  
 ry pomp of thy expences, and way of  
 living ; nay, thou art become not on-  
 ly a miserable wife, but in so being,  
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thou art also a wicked adulteress, prostituting thy self to the very vilest of thy lawful Husbands servants : if thou be not incestuous, it is no thank to thee, there being nothing in this world so near of kin to thee, as to make way for incest. Return, return, O Shulamite, return, return ; put away thine adulteries from between thy breasts, and so shall the King yet again greatly desire thy beauty ; for so he hath promised, Jer. 3. 21. that when there shall be a voice heard upon the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel, because they have perverted their way, and forgotten the Lord their God, and the backsliding children shall return, that then he will heal their backslidings.

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CHAP.

## CHAP. VIII.

The term or end of Religion eternal life, considered in a double notion. First, it signifies the essential happiness of the soul. The second, as it takes in many glorious appendices. The former more fully described, the latter more briefly. The noble and genuine breathings of the godly soul after, and springing up into the former; in what sense she may be said to desire the latter. The argument drawn from the example of Christ, Moses and Paul moderated. A general answer given to the Query. It ends in a serious exhortation made to Christians, to live and love more spiritually, more suitably to the nature of souls, redeemed souls, resulting from the whole discourse.

I Am now come to the last thing whereby this most noble principle is described, viz. the Term or End of it; and that is said here in the

Text

Text to be Everlasting Life. This is the ἀνὰ τῆς ἡλικίας, or highest pitch of perfection, unto which the New Creature is continually growing up; which the Apostle Paul hath express'd with as much grand eloquence, as words are able to magnifie it, calling it μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: This is that unbounded Ocean, which this living fountain by so many incessant issues, and universal streamings perpetually endeavour to empty it self into, or rather to transform it self in. Now what this is we must confess with the Apostle Paul (and indeed we have more reason to make such a confession, than he had) that it doth not yet appear, viz. neither fully, nor distinctly: But yet, since I am thus cast upon the contemplation of it, it will be a pertinent piece of pleasure, a little to enquire into it; and though it surpass the power and skill of all created comprehensions to take the just dimensions, and faithfully give in the height and depth, and length, and breadth of it;

yet we may essay to walk about this heavenly Jerusalem (as the Psalmist speaks of the earthly) and tell the Towers thereof, mark her Walls, consider her Palaces, that we may tell it to the generation following.

First, Then we will consider *Eternal Life* in the most proper notion of it, as it implies the *essential happiness* of the soul; and so it is no other than the souls *pure, perfect, and established state*. By a *state*, I do designedly disparage that grosser notion of a *place*, as that which scarce deserves to enter into the description of such a glory, or at best, will obtain but a very low room there: By *purity*, I do purposely explode that *carnal ease*, rest, immunity, affluence of sensual delights accommodated only to the animal life, which last the *Mahumetans*, and the former too many profess Christians, and the Jews almost generally do dream of, and judge Heaven to be. By *perfection*, I do distinguish it from the best state, which the best men upon earth can possibly be in. So then I take *Eternal Life* in the

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the soul to that eternal goodness,  
Eter- truth, and love, as far as it is, or may  
n of become capable of the communica-  
business tions of the divinity. This life was  
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bliss purchased by our ever blessed Lord and  
dis- Saviour in the dayes of his flesh, and  
place, here in the Text promised to every  
inter believing soul. Now, in as much as  
ory, we are ignorant both of the present  
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bly in another world. The Popish School-  
in men do nicely dispute about the *sight*



of God, and the love of God, to wit in whether of these the formal blessedness of the soul consisteth, ill separating those whom God hath so firmly joyned together; as if it were possible that either a *blind love*, or a jejune and *unaffectionate speculation* could render a soul entirely happy: But it is much safer to say, that the happiness and eternal life of the soul, standeth in the *possession or fruition* of God; and this doth necessarily import the proper perfection of every faculty. Nothing can be the *formal happiness* of a spirit that is either *inferiour or extrinsecal* to it; it must be something divine, and that wrought into the very nature and temper of it, I doubt not to affirm that if the soul of man were possibly advanced, so as to receive adoration or *divine power*, yet if it were in the mean time void of *divine dispositions*, and a God-like nature; it were far from being glorified, and made happy as to its capacity. What *health* is to the body, that is *holiness* to the soul; which haply the Apostle alludes to, when he speaks of the *spirit of a sound mind*, 2 Tim. 1. 7.

Secondly,

Secondly, There is another notion of *Eternal Life* ( which some contend for ) by which they mean not barely the essential happiness of the soul, but that with the addition of many suitable and glorious circumstances, the essential happiness of the soul, as it is attended with the appendixes of a glorified body, the beholding of Christ, the amicable society of Angels, freedom from temptations, the knowledge of the secrets of nature and providence, and some such like: to which may be also added ( though of a lower degree ) open absolution, or a visible deliverance of the Saints out of the overthrow of the wicked, at the conflagration of the world, power over Devils, eminence of place, enjoyment of friends, and some other like. Now let us briefly consider what tendencies there are in the religious soul towards each of these: And here I must crave leave to speak jointly both of the *End*, and of the *Motion* thereunto; though it may be thought that the former only falls fairly under our present consideration.

First, Then I suppose that *Eternal*  
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Life in the first sense of it, is intended here, to wit, the *essential happiness* of the soul, or its perfect and everlasting enjoyment of God. For the description is here made of Religion it self in the *abstract*, or that principle of divine life, which Christ Jesus implanted in the soul; and being so considered, it is hard to conceive how that should spring up into any of these appendant circumstances, or into any thing but the completion and perfection of it self; though the religious soul taken in the *concrete*, possibly may. And indeed, though we should allow (which we shall take into consideration under the next head) that many of those high scriptural phrases which are brought to describe the future condition of believing souls, do principally respect the *appendixes* of its *essential happiness*, (as a Kingdom, a house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens, an inheritance reserved, a place prepared, and the like) yet it seems very unnatural to interpret this phrase, *Life*, and *Eternal Life*, any otherwise than of that which I call the

the essential happiness of the soul : But if we interpret it of this, the sense is very fair and easie ; thus, this principle of divine life is continually endeavouring to grow up to its just altitude, to advance it self unto a triumphant state, even as all other principles of life do naturally tend towards a final accomplishment, and ultimate perfection. *Carnal self*, or the animal life may be indeed said to be a well of water too, *poysinous water* ; but that springs up into a *sensual life*, popular applause, self-accommodations ; or if you will in the Apostles phrase, into the *fulfilment of the lusts of the flesh*. This I speak only by way of illustratory opposition : for to speak more properly, this corrupt principle hath in it the central force of death and Hell, and is alwayes tumbling downward ; whereas this divine principle is alwayes climbing upward : But they do both agree in this, that they do both seek their own gratifications, and study to acquire their respective perfections. The everlasting and most glorious enjoyment

ment of God is certainly most perfective of the soul ; and therefore is most properly and most deservingly said to be its *Eternal Life*, according to that of our Saviour, *Joh. 17. 3*. Now this *Eternal Life* is not a thing specifically different from Religion, or the image of God, or the divine life; but indeed the greatest height, and the most possible perfection of it self: even as the Sun at noon-day is not a light really distinct from what it was in the first dawns of the morning, but a different degree, and far more glorious state; which seems to be the very similitude whereby the Spirit of God illustrateth the matter in hand, *Prov. 4. 18*. Or as a man of perfect age is not a distinct species from a child, but much more compleat and excellent in that species; to which the Apostle refers, treating of this subject, *1 Cor. 13. 11*. Man hath not two distinct kinds of happiness in the two distinct worlds that he is made to live in; but one and the same thing is his blessedness in both, which, as I said before, must needs be

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be the enjoyment of God. The translation made of the Text is very suitable to this notion ; for this divine principle is said to spring up, not *unto* , but *into* everlasting life , *g. d.* it springs up till it be swallowed up into the perfect knowledge, love, and enjoyment of God. Even as youth is swallowed up in manhood : so this *grace* is swallowed up in *glory*, and not so much *abolished*, as indeed *perfected*.

By this phrase , the genius of true Religion , and the excellent temper of the true Religious soul , is most lively described. This is the soul , that being in some measure delivered from its unnatural bondage , and freed from its unhappy confinement now spreads it self in God , lifts up it self unto him , stretches it self upon him, is not content with a Heaven meerly to come , but brings down Heaven into it self , by carrying up it self unto , and after the God of Heaven. God is become great , only great in the eye of such a Christian ; he is indeed become

All

*All things* to him; whilst this principle is rightly and actually predominant in him, he knows no *interest* but to thrive and grow great in God; no *will*, but to serve the will, and comply with the mind of God; no *end*, but to be united to God; no *business*, but to display and reflect the glory and perfections of God upon the Earth; the main *business* of his life, I say, is to serve him, the main *ambition* of his soul to be like unto him, and his main *happiness* in this world to be united to him, and in the world to come, to be swallowed up in him, in this world to know, and love, and rest, and delight in, and enjoy God *more than all things*, and in the world to come to enjoy him *more than so*. The gladsome growings up of the tender flowers unto the friendly Sun, being once powerfully surpriz'd with his precious and benign influences, and the chearful haste with which the sympathetick needle so amareously pursues the enchanting loadstone, being once rightly toucht and affected with it,

do



do a little (though but a little) resemble and represent the motions of a spirit impregnated with this divine principle, and strongly impress with the image and stamp of God: he puts in his hand by the hole of the door, and the bowels of the espoused soul are presently moved, yea, melted for him, *Cant.* 5. 4. He casts the skirt of his garment, the mantle of his love, and presently the converted soul leaves all to follow him. *Faith*, *Hope*, and *Love* are knitting and springing graces, and this *Eternal Life* is the end and perfection of them all; not that any one of them (I conceive) shall be utterly incassated and abolished, as some conclude concerning the two former (though without good ground I think) from the Apostles words, *1 Cor.* 13. 13. But *Faith* will be ripened into the most firm and undisturbed *confidence*, *affiance*, and *acquiescence* in God, *hope* will be advanced into a more chearful, powerful, and confident *expectation*, having for its object the perpetuation

tion of the souls felicity ; and love will become much more loving, and more clearly distinguishable from the imperfect longings and languishings of this present state, when it shall flower up into pure delights and complacencies, resting and glorying in the arms of its edequate, satisfactory and eternal object. The faith of the hypocrite (and indeed his hope too) is still springing up into self-preservation, deliverance, liberty, a splendid and pompous state of the church (that is of his own party) or some such thing as will gratify the animal life, and there it terminates ; but the faith of the sincere and religious soul springs up into eternal life, it knows no term but the salvation of the soul, 1 Pet. 1. 9. As his hope knows no accomplishment but a state of God-like purity and perfection, 1 John 3. 3. The more natural man lives within himself, within a circle of his own, and cannot get out ; whether he eat, or drink, or pray, or be zealous for the popular pulling down of the political

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litical Antichrist, he is still in his own circle, he is still sacrificing in all this to that great *bell* the animal life, as I have already made evident: But the godly soul is disinterested of self, and so is still contriving the advancement of a nobler life within it self and moving towards God, as his supreme and all-sufficient good. Give him all that the whole world can afford, he cannot fix, nor settle, nor centre here: God hath put in to him a holy restless appetite after a higher good, which he would rather be, than what he is. I know indeed that the soul that is thus divinely free, may be hindred in its flight; but it will deliver it self from the clog at length: you may choak and damm up the streamings of this fountain perhaps, but they will burst out again; you may cast ashes upon this pure fire for a time, but it will flame out again; such a damp cannot arise, no not from Hell it self, as to extinguish it. The Philistines, I remember, stopped the wells of water which *Abraham* had digged

digged in Gerar, and filled them with earth, Gen. 26. 15. But this well of water which God diggeth in the holy and humble soul, cannot be stopped, neither by the Devil that King of Gerar, (that is, of wandrings) Job 1. 7. nor by any of his servants, but it will find vent upward: though you endeavour to fill it with earth, which indeed is the likeliest to choak it, (for *amor rerum terrenarum est viscus spiritualium pennarum*) though you cast dust and gravel of earthly pleasures, profits, or preferments into it, yet it is a well of living water, and will work its passage out. The hungriings of the godly soul are not, cannot be satisfied, till it come to feed upon the *bidden Manna*, nor its thirstings quenched, till it come to be swallowed up in the unbounded Ocean of life and love.

But I see I cannot divide springing up from *Eternal Life*, nor pursue the term of Religion, but I must also take in the motion of the Religious soul, whereby he pursues it, which

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which I have already handled in my discourse, therefore I will quit this head, and take a short view of the second.

The secondary and more improper notion of Eternal Life; I told you, was *that which takes in the circumstances or appendices of it.* And here we must needs allow, that the holy Scriptures do openly avouch some of these circumstances, as those especially of the first rank that I named, of some of which it seems to make great account; and possibly the Scripture may some where or other imply all the rest, even those of the inferior rank. Again, we will allow, that many of those phrases which the Scripture uses to describe the blessed state of the other world, do principally respect these *appendices* of the souls essential happiness: Such perhaps are the *Crown of Righteousness* mentioned by the Apostle, 1 Tim. 4. 8. *The price of the high Calling*, mentioned by the same Apostle, Phil. 3. 14. *The House which is from Heaven*, spoken of, 2 Cor. 6. 2.

*A King-*

*A Kingdom, an incorruptible Unberitance, a place prepared, Mansions, a reward, praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. 1. 7. And that glory, honour and peace spoken of by the Apostle Paul, Rom. 2. 10. these are all Scripture descriptions of the other state, and I suppose we may grant them to have a peculiar reference to this secondary and prater-essential happiness of the soul: Though I know not any necessity there is to be so liberal in our concessions; for it may be fairly said concerning all, or most of them, that the design of these phrases, is not so much to establish this less proper notion, or to point out to the circumstances of the glorified state, as to insinuate how much more ample and glorious that state shall be than this in which we now are; as a prize is looked upon as somewhat more excellent than what is done or expended to acquire it (it must needs be so esteemed by runners and wrestlers) a Kingdom is a more glorious state than*

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than that of subjection, and an Inheritance is incomparably more ample than the pension that is allowed the heir in his minority.

But these things being conceded, it doth not appear how far, or under what notion the religious soul (as such) doth spring up into these additional glories, and thirst after them. I know there are many that speak very highly of these appendices, and allow the godly soul a very high and irrelative valuation of them: And this they do principally infer from the examples of Christ himself, as also of Moses and Paul. Give me leave therefore to suggest something, not to enervate, but to moderate the Argument drawn from these persons, and after that I shall briefly lay down what I conceive to be most Scriptural and rational in this matter.

First, As for the example of Christ, it seems to make not much for them in this matter. For however the Text is very plain, that for the joy that was set before him, he endured



dured the cross, and this joy seems plainly to be his session at the right hand of God, Heb. 12. 2. Yet if by this joy we understand a more full and glorious possession of God, and a more excellent exaltation of his humane nature, to a more free fruition of the divine, then it cannot be applied to any thing but the springing up of the gracious soul into its essential happiness; which I have already contended for, as being the proper genius of such a soul; or if by this Joy and Throne we understand the power that Christ foresaw he should be vested with of leading captivity captive, trampling under feet the powers of hell and darkness, and procuring gifts for men (which seems to me to be most likely) then it belongs not at all to men, neither can this example be drawn into imitation.

As for the instance of Moses, who is said to have had respect to the recompence of the reward, Heb. 11. 26. It is not yet granted, that that recompence of reward relates principally

principally to these appendants of the souls essential happiness, neither can it, I suppose, be evinced: But, though I should also allow that, (which I incline to do) yet all that can be inferred from it is but a *respect* that *Moses* had, as our Translation well renders it, or *some account*, which he in his sufferings made of this recompence; which was a very warrantable contemplation.

The Apostle *Paul* indeed doth openly profess that he looked for, and desired the coming of Christ from Heaven upon the account of that glorious body which he would then cloath him with, *Phil. 3. 20, 21*. And so he might sure, and yet not desire it *principally* and *primarily*, but *secondarily*, and with *reference*.

And this leads me to the general answer that I was preparing to give, which is this. Some of these circumstances which I named, especially that of the glorified body, may be reduced to the essential happiness of the soul, or included in it, so as that the soul could not otherwise be perfectly

perfectly happy. It is the vote of all Divines I think, that a Christian is not compleatly happy, till he consist of a soul and body both glorified. And indeed, considering the dear affection, and essential aptitude that God hath planted in the humane soul for a body, we cannot well conceive how she should be perfectly happy without one: And this earthly body is (alas) an unequal yolk-fellow, in which she is half stifled, and rather *buried* than conveniently *lodg'd*; so that it seems necessary even to her essential happiness, that she should have some more heavenly and glorious body, wherein she may commodiously and pleasantly exert her innate powers, and whereby she may express her self in a spiritual and noble manner suitable to her own natural dignity and vigour, and to her infinitely-amiable, and most beloved object.

Concerning the rest of the circumstances which cannot be thus reduced, I conceive that such of them

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them as are necessary to the essential happiness of the soul by way of subserviency, may be eyed, and desired, and thirsted after secondarily, and with reference, as I said before, that is, under this notion only, as they are subservient to that essential blessedness; I confess I do not understand under what other notion a religious soul can lift up it self unto them, I mean, not so far forth as it is holy and religious, and acts suitably to that divine principle which the *Father of Spirits*, or rather the *Father of our Lord Jesus Christ* hath implanted in it. And if there be any other circumstance which cannot be reduced to one of these kinds, I suppose it may be reckoned amongst the objects and gratifications of the *animal life*, and not to make up any part of the godly man's *Heaven*, or that *Eternal Life* which Religion springs up into. For I do easily imagine, that a *fleshly fancy* may verily be mightily ravisht with the desire of such a Heaven as is suitable to it; and that a meer animal man

may be as heartily desirous to be in such a *Kingdom of God*, as he hath shaped out to himself, as he is utterly unwilling that the true *Kingdom of God* ( such as the Apostle describes, *Rom. 14. 17.* consisting in *righteousness*, and *peace*, and *joy in the Holy Ghost* ) should be in him. If our continual cry be after *safety*, *self-preservation*, *liberty*, *redemption*, and *deliverance* from those things only that oppress and grieve our *fleshy interest*, and our thirstings principally terminated in *Knowledge* ( though it be of God himself ) *freedom* from *condemnation*, *power* over *Devils*, yea or any visible *pomp*, *glory*, or *splendour*, though it be of never so *ethereal* and *heavenly* a nature, what do we more than others? what is all this more than may naturally spring up from the *animal life*, and be ultimately resolved into *carnal self*?

Wherefore as a result from the whole discourse, especially from this last part of it, let me earnestly entreat all the professors of this holy Religion, which the blessed *Messiah* Christ

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Christ Jesus hath so dearly bought for the world , and so clearly revealed in it , not to value themselves by any thing which the power of natural self-love may exert or desire , perform or expect , nor by any thing below the image of God , and the internal and transforming manifestations of Christ Jesus in them ; the perfection of which is eternal life in the most proper and true notion of it , as you have heard. I know that I have often suggested the same lesson in this short treatise , but I know also that I can never inculcate it often enough ; nay the eloquence of Angels is not sufficient to imprint it upon the hearts of men. Possibly it may startle some hypocritical professors , and carnal-Gospellers , ( God grant it may effectually ! ) and make the ears of many that hear it to tingle , but yet I will proclame it , *It is possible for a man to desire , not only the things of this world ( which St. James speaks of Jam. 4. 3. ) But even Heaven it self, to consume it upon his lusts ; and be*

may as truly be making provision for the flesh, to fulfill it in the lusts thereof, in longing after a kind of self-salvation, as in eating, and drinking, and rising up to play. Certainly a true Christian spirit rightly invigorated and actuated by this divine and potent principle, Christian Religion, cannot look upon Heaven as *merely future*, or as something perfectly distinct from him; but he eyes it as *life, eternal life, the perfection of the purest and divinest life communicable to a soul*, and is daily thirsting after it, or rather as it is in the Text, growing up into it. I know that Heaven is sometimes called a *Rest*, in opposition to the *dissatisfaction* of the uncentred and unbelieving soul; but in opposition to a *sluggish, inert, and dormant rest*, it is here said to be *life, eternal life*. Let us shew ourselves to be *living Christians*, by springing up into the utmost consummation of *life*: Let it appear that Christ Jesus the Prince of Life, who was manifested on purpose to take away our sins, ( 1 John. 3. 5. ) hath not only covered our shame, and as it



it were embalmed our dead souls to keep them from putrefaction, and strewed them with the flowers of his merits, to take away their noisome stink from the nostrils of his Father, but hath truly advanced, re-instated, and made to flourish the souls that sin had so miserably degraded and deflowred. Deliver your selves ( O immortal souls ) from all those unsuitable and unseemly cares, studies and joys, from all those low and particular ends and lusts, which do not only pinch and straiten, but even debase and debauch you : Let it not be said, that the *King of Sodom* made *Abraham* rich ; that your main delight, happiness and contentment is derived from any prosperous, plentiful, peaceable, pompous state, any thing that may be called a *self-accommodation*, either in the world that now is, or that which is to come ; but from the righteousness of Faith, and your vital union with the Father and the Son : To whom in the unity of the spirit, be honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

I John



1 John 1. 3.

— Our fellowship is with the Father,  
and with his Son Jesus Christ.

**T**H E S E words do express the way of a Christians *living*, and that kind of *Converse* whereby a good man is distinguished from all other men.

A good man is not differenced from other men by any thing *without him*, any *Church Priviledges* which are common to hypocrites and sincere Christians; any external visible *performances*, in which the Disciples of the Pharisees may be more abundant and more specious than the Disciples of Christ, *Matt. 9. 14.* much less by any corporal or temporal enjoyment or ornament, *strength, beauty, riches, descent, &c.* nor by any carnal *relati-*

on,

on, though it were to *Abraham*, as the Jews bragg'd of their Father *Abraham*, *John* 8. 33. but by something *internal*, *substantial*, by a relation to God; The character of a good man must be fetcht from his correspondence to the *chief good*, and the happiness of a soul must be judged of by its relation to life, and love and blessedness it self. Things external, corporal, temporal, make some difference amongst men, but it is but *nominal* and *ritular* in comparison: By these, men are said to be *rich* or *poor*, *noble* or *ignoble*; but men are *really* and *substantially* differenced by the relation that they have to God; by this they are *good* or *bad*, *Godly* or *wicked*. This is the most certain and proper note of a good man, *viz.* *Communion with God*: In all other things he may be like other men, but in this he differs from and excells them all. This is a character proper *quarto modo*, for it agrees to every good man, to none but a good man, and *alwayes* to him, as we shall see hereafter,

hereafter. The ground of my discourse then shall be this short and plain Proposition. *viz.*

*A godly man hath communion with God.*

In order to the more distinct handling hereof, I must premise a few things briefly.

1. *That the gracious and loving God made nothing miserable of all that he made.* There are no slaves born in his great house of the world. He made all things out of himself, and he hath no idea of evil in himself, so that it was not possible that he should make any thing evil or miserable. Every thing was good, Gen. 1. and so in some sense happy. He was free to make the world, but making it, he could not make it evil or miserable. Every thing is the product of Almighty love and goodness.

2. *The happiness of every creature consists in its acting agreeably to that nature that God gave it, and those ends which he propounded to it, and suitably to those laws which he gave them; which*

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laws were contrived with the greatest  
*suitableness* to those natures, and *sub-*  
*serviency* to those ends. Every crea-  
 ture is in its kind happy, whilest it  
 acts agreeably to that nature which  
 the wise creator implanted in it; as  
 the Sun runs its race without ceasing,  
 and rejoyces so to do, and is in some  
 sense happy in so doing. Departing  
 from that nature it becomes misera-  
 ble, as the earth bringing forth *briers*  
 and *thorns* instead of those good fruits  
 which it was appointed to bring forth,  
 is said to be *curst*, Gen. 3. 17, 18.

3. The happiness of the creature is  
 higher or lower, greater or lesser, ac-  
 cording as it comes nearer to God, or is  
 further off from him, according as it  
 receives more or less from him, ac-  
 cording to what communion it hath  
 with him. The life and happiness of  
 the Sun is much lower than that of  
 a man, because it cannot enjoy such  
 high and excellent communications  
 from, or communion with God as  
 man doth.

4. There can be no communion with

out likeness. The Sun shines upon a stone wall, as well as upon man, but a stone wall ha's no communion with the Sun, because it hath no eyes to see the light of it as man hath, nor can receive the benign influences of its heat as the herbs do. A log of wood lyeth in the water as well as the Fish, but it hath no communion with the water, nor receives no advantage by it as the Fish doth. God is present (according to his infinite essence) with the Devils as well as with the Angels, but they have no likeness in nature to him, and so no communion with him, as these have.

§. God hath given a more large and excellent capacity to man, than to any other of his creatures upon earth. God hath endued man with reason, and so made him capable of a higher life, and a more excellent communion with his Maker than all the rest. The rational soul of all sublunary creatures is only capable to know, love, serve, enjoy, imitate God, and so to have

have a glorious communion with him. The Sun in all its glory and brightness is not so excellent a Being as any soul of man upon this account. And although man by his fall lost his *actual* communion with God, yet he is a reasonable creature still, he hath not lost his capacity of receiving influences from him, and enjoying communion with him. The world when it is at the darkest, is yet capable of being enlightened.

6. *When the nature of man is by divine grace healed of its distemper- edness, and restored to its former recti- tude to act suitably to the end for which it was made, and to spend it self upon its proper object, then man comes to have a right communion with God, and to be happy.* All rational souls are capable of holding communion with God, but all do not hold com- munion with him, but they that ex- press the purity and holiness of the divine life, that know God and live like him, these are his children, *Mat. 5. 15.* and those only do rightly  
and



and really converse with him : when the spirit of God informs these rational souls , and derives the strength of a divine life through them , and stamps the lively impressions of Divine perfections upon them, rendring our hearts, wills and wayes conformable to that glorious pattern , that infinite good, then do we enjoy a proper communion with him , and are *truly* blessed ; though we are not *compleatly* blessed , till this conformity be perfected according to what those souls *are* , or *may* be capable of.

This is the true and proper notion of mans communion with God ; and relation to him , which we cannot *fully describe* till we do more fully *enjoy*. That soul that truly lives and feeds upon God, do's *taste* more than it can *tell* ; and yet it can tell this, that this is the most high , excellent, noble , glorious life in the whole world.

This communion, as also the intimacy and closeness of it are described

scribed variously in the Holy Scriptures, by the similitude of *members* being in the body, 1 Cor. 12. 27. Of *branches* being in the Vine, Joh. 15. 1, 2. By being *formed according to Gods image*, Rom. 8. 29. *Changed into his image*, 2 Cor. 3. 18. By Gods *dwelling in the soul, and the soul in him*, 1 Joh. 4. 16. By Christs being *formed in the soul*, Gal. 4. 19. By the souls *having Christ*, 1 Joh. 5. 12. By Christs *supping with the soul, and the soul with him*, Rev. 3. 20. Because nothing is more our *own*, nor more *one* with us, than that which we eat and drink, being incorporated into us; therefore is this spiritual communion between God and the godly soul oft-times in Scripture described by our *eating and drinking with him*. Thus God was pleased to allow his people under the law, when they had offered up a part of their Beasts in Sacrifice to him, to sit down and feast upon the rest, as a token of that familiarity and oneness that was between him and them. By the like action our Sa-  
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viour shadow out the same myſte-  
rie, when in the Sacrament of his ſup-  
per he appointed them to ſit down  
and eat and drink with him, to inti-  
mate their feeding upon him, and  
moſt cloſe communion with him : yea  
the ſtate of *glory* which is the moſt  
perfect communion with God, is thus  
shadowed out too, *Mat. 8. 11. Rev.*  
*19. 9.* And which is worth nothing, I  
think the Sacramental eating and  
drinking hath ſome reference to that  
moſt intimate communion of the  
Saints with God in glory : our Savi-  
our himſelf ſeems to imply as much  
in that ſpeech of his, *Luke 22. 30.*  
*That ye may eat and drink at my Ta-*  
*ble in my Kingdom :* In which words  
he ſeems plainly to allude to the Sa-  
cramental eating and drinking which  
he had a little before inſtituted, *viz.*  
*ver. 19.* Which makes ſome to believe  
that that geſture is to be retained in  
that ordinance, which is moſt proper  
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of our Saviour in appointing this Supper, which was to represent that familiar communion which is between himself and every believing soul. I will not here examine the validity of their argument, which possibly if prest home might introduce a rudeness into the worship of God under pretence of familiarity: but it seems very plain that the nature of that ordinance doth shadow out the intimate communion between God and a godly soul.

I have already in part prevented myself, and shewed you wherein the souls communion with God consists: But yet to give you a more distinct knowledge of this great mysterie, I shall unfold it in these three following particulars.

I. *A godly soul hath communion with God in his Attributes.* When the Soul of man is molded and formed into a resemblance of the divine nature, then hath it a true fellowship with him. Now this communion with God in his *Attributes* is to be seen *two* wayes.

I. *When*

1. *When the soul is in its measure, according to the capacity of a creature, all that which God is. This is the communion which the Angels have with God : There beholding of the face of God is not to be understood of a meer speculation, or an idle gazing upon a Deity, but they see him, by receiving his Image upon themselves, and reflecting his glory and brightness ; they partake of the goodness, purity, holiness, wisdom, righteousness of God, which makes them such glorious spirits ; and the want of this makes the other whom we call Devils, to be what they are. Thus godly men shall have communion with God, they shall see God, Mat. 5. 8. Heb. 12. 14. Yea thus they have communion with him in some measure : They do not only see God in the world as the Devils do, nor see him in the word as many hypocritical and wicked men do, but they see him in themselves, in the frame of their own souls, they find themselves molded into his image, and a resemblance of him*

him drawn upon them. This is a beautiful vision of God true and real though not full and complete. This is set out in Scripture by being *holy as God is holy*, 1 Pet. i. 16. *perfect as God is perfect*, Mat. 5. ult. This our Saviour exhorts us to seek after, Mat. 11. 29. *take my yoke upon ye, learn of me for I am meek and lowly*; and the Apostle, Ephes. 5. 1. *Be ye followers of God as dear Children*. When the nature and perfections of God, his holiness, goodness, righteousness, wisdom, &c. are copyed out upon our natures, and the same Spirit is in us, which was in Christ Jesus, then have we a true communion with God; which blessed communion, when the soul becomes all that which God is by a conformity of nature!

2. *When the soul in its actions as a creature, doth rightly answer to the Attributes of the Creator*. As when the soul doth answer the goodness of God with suitable affections of love and joy, and delight; when the soul doth correspond to the Sovereignty and

and wisdom of God by the Acts of self-denial and resignation ; doth converse with the righteousness of God by patience and a holy Acquiescency. When the soul doth rightly exert those Acts which are proper and suitable to the nature of God, then it may be said to hold communion with him in his attributes ; when the actions and motions of the soul do correspond to the divine nature and attributes. Now this suitability of the soul I mean especially with reference to the incommunicable attributes of God, where there is no place for imitation, though it hold good in the rest also.

2. *A godly soul hath communion with God in his word.* To read, profess or hear the word is not to hold a real communion with God therein : many do so that are strangers to God : A man may read my letters, and yet correspond with my enemy. That Son in the Gospel that heard his Fathers command, and answered, *I go for*, but went not, had no right communion



munion with his paternal authority. But when the soul is enobled into such a frame as this word doth require, then it holds communion with God in his word: *e. g.* when the soul puts forth those acts of humiliation, holy fear and reverence, godly trembling which do suit the nature of a divine *threatning*, when the soul answers the *command* of God with suitable resolutions, repentings, reformati-  
*ons* and real obedience, when it entertains the *promise* with suitable acts of holy delight, joy, refreshment, recum-  
*bency*, and acquiesces in the same, then doth it truly converse with God in his word.

3. *A godly soul hath communion with God in his works.* And that is, when the soul doth answer the several *pro-  
 vidences* of God with suitable and pertinent affections and dispositions. The godly soul doth not only *eye* and *observe* the hand of God in all things that fall out, but doth *comply* with those providences, and is molded into that frame, and put upon those duties  
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which such providences do call for. Then doth the soul rightly hold communion with God in his works, when it is humbled under humbling providences, is refreshed, strengthened and grows up under prosperous providences, as they did *Act. 9. 31.* who having rest given them, were edified, comforted, multiplied, &c. when the soul doth rightly comport with every providence, and the will is molded into the will of God, then do we hold communion with him in his works. This theme is large, because the works of God are manifold of Creation, Redemption, Preservation, works towards other men, and towards our selves, both towards our outward and inward man: A godly soul hath communion with God in all these; in the sense that I named even now, though perhaps not equally in all, yet sincerely and truly.

By what hath been said, you understand that right fellowship with God is not a bare communion of  
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*names* ; To have the name of God called upon us, and to be called *Christians*, or the *people of God*, or to name the name of God, to profess it, to cry, *Lord, Lord*, doth not make any one really and truly the better man, doth not make a soul rightly happy : It is not enough to cry the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord with them in *Jer* 1. 4. to make our boast in the Law with them, *Rom.* 2. 23. to call our selves the Children of *Abraham*, as the Jews did in *John Baptists* time, *Mat.* 3. 9. These priviledges and professions are extrinsecal to the soul, and do nothing to the true ennobling of it. But right fellowship with God is a communion of *hearts* and *natures*, of *will* and *affections*, of *interests* and *ends* : To have one heart and will, the same interett and ends with God, is to be truly godly ; A *Godlike* man is the only *godly* man : A *Christ-like* nature brought into the soul doth only denominate a man a true *Christian*. It is not speaking together, but loving and living together that brings

brings God and the soul into one, *I live, yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me*, Gal. 2. 20. And thus I suppose you have a fair account why the Apostle *James, chap. 2.* do's so much preferre works before faith, (for indeed faith is nothing worth, save only that faith which joynes the soul to the object, and makes the thing believed ones own) as also why the Apostle *Paul* prefers love before a faith of miracles, *1 Cor. 13. 2.* Though indeed a justifying faith is the most miraculous: that faith that *unites* the soul and God together is more excellent, and indeed more miraculous than the faith that *removes* Mountains. When I consider the proper happiness, and perfection of a soul, and the nature of this true blissful communion with God, I cannot but wonder how it is possible, that men should take their communion with God to consist in an overly acquaintance with him, profession of him, performances to him. I am confident it is not possible that men should have any

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any true feeling of happiness in such acquaintance ; no more than a man can be really filled with the seeing or craving of meat, which he eats not.

Before I apply the Doctrine, give me leave to lay down some rules or positions tending further to explain and clear it.

1. This must be held, which I toucht upon before, that *there can be no communion between God and man, but by a likeness of nature; a new, a divine principle implanted in the soul.* A beast hath no communion with a man, because Reason the ground of such communion is wanting. Of all the Creatures, there was none found that could be a meet help for *Adam*, that could be taken into the humane society, till *Eve* was made, who was a humane person. So neither can there be any conjunction of the soul with God, but by oneness of spirit 1 Cor. 6. 17. *He that is joyned to the Lord is one spirit.*

2. *There can be no communion with God*

God but by a Mediator, no Mediator but Christ Jesus who is God-man. Two cannot walk together, nor hold communion except they be agreed, And there can be no agreement made between God and man but by Christ Jesus. Therefore it is said here, our communion is with the Father and the Son, *q. d.* with the Father by the Son. And *faith*, whereby the Soul and God are united, is still said to be *faith in Christ*, as we find up and down the Scriptures.

3. *There can be no perfect communion with God in this life.* Our communion with Heaven whilst we are upon earth is imperfect, our resemblance to God is scant and dark in comparison of what it shall be. We know but *in part*, love but *in part*, enjoy but *in part*; we are but *in part* holy and happy. There can be no perfect communion with God, till there be a perfect reconciliation of natures as well as persons; and that cannot be whilst there is any thing unlike to God in the soul, whilst any  
 impure

impure thing dwells in the Soul which cannot truly close with God, nor God with that. The Holy Spirit can never suffer any defiled thing to unite it self with it; *μη καθαρόν καθαρόν ἐσθλὸν εἶναι μὴ ἁγίον ἦ*, it is not lawful for any impure thing to mix it self with pure Divinity, so Socrates the Heathen. *What communion hath righteousness with unrighteousness* saith the Apostle 2 Cor. 6. 14. and so far as a righteous man is in any part unrighteous, so far he is a stranger to God: The unregenerate part of a regenerate man hath no more communion with God than a wicked man, than the devil himself hath, no more than darkness hath with light.

4. *Our communion with God must be distinguished from the sense and feeling of it.* Many have run upon sad miscarriages (and those indeed extremes,) whilst they place communion with God in the sense and feeling of it, in raptures of joy, extasies and transports of soul; which indeed (if they be real) are not so much it.



as the flower of it, something resulting and separable from it. Communion with God cannot be lost in a Saint, for then he is no Saint; for it is the *proprium quarto modo* of a Saint, to have communion with God: and a Saint under desertion hath communion with God even then as really, though not so *feellingly* as at any other time, so far as he is sanctified. But the sense of this communion may be very much (if not altogether) lost, and oftentimes is lost.

5. *A souls communion with God cannot be interrupted by any local mutations.* It is a spiritual conjunction, and is not violated by any confinement, the walls of a Prison cannot separate God and the godly soul; banishment cannot drive a soul from God, ——— *Calum non animum mutant*, &c. The blessed Angels, those ministering spirits, when they are despatcht into the utmost ends of the world upon the service of God, are even then beholding the face of God, and do enjoy as intimate communion with

with him as ever : The case is the same with all godly souls , Whose communion with God do's not depend upon any local situation ; It is not thousands of miles that can beget a distance between God and the soul. Indeed nothing but *sin* do's it , or can do it, ——— *Your iniquities have separated between you and your God*, Isa. 59. 2. nothing but sin is contrary to this divine fellowship, and so nothing but that can interrupt this spiritual society. To speak properly, sin do's not so much *cause* the souls distance from God, as it self *is* that distance. Man and Wife remain one , though at a hundred miles distance ; and believing souls do maintain a certain spiritual communion one with another, though in severall parts of the world. The society and communion of godly souls one with another , so far as it is spiritual , cannot be interrupted by bodily distance , much less then the fellowship of God with the godly soul, who carries about with him, and in him a divine nature, the image of God,

a holy godlike disposition whitherso-  
ever he goes.

6. *This communion with God* which I have been speaking of is much better than all outward acts and enjoyments, duties and ordinances whatsoever, though they be never so many or specious. God himself long since decided this matter, that a broken and contrite heart is better than all Sacrifices, *Psal. 51. 17.* that to obey was better than Sacrifice, *1 Sam. 15. 22.* that mercy was better than Sacrifice, *Hos. 6. 6.* that to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God was to be preferred before thousands of Rams and ten thousands of Rivers of Oyl, *Mic. 6. 7, 8.* It holds in reference to *Gospel duties*, though they may seem more spirituall, than the oblations of the Law. A real soul-communion with God, a communion of hearts and natures, of wills and affections, of interests and ends is infinitely more excellent than all *hearing, praying, celebration of Sabbath or Sacraments*, *Jam. 1. 25.* as the end is more excellent

lent than the means : For so stands the case between them.

Yea I will add ( though some proud and wanton spirits have made strange work with it , yet ) it is a sure and most excellent doctrine, that this spiritual communion is a *continual Sabbath* , ( a Sabbath of *communion* is much better than a Sabbath of *rest* : ) this is the Sabbath that the Angels and Saints in Heaven keep, though they know no such thing as a first day in the week , have no reading , preaching, or praying amongst them. This is a *continual praying* , and effectual way of praying in silence. A right *active sucking faith* do's virtually contain a prayer in it ; Right believing is powerful praying. The knees , eyes and tongues bear the least share in prayer , the whole of the work lyes upon the soul , and particularly upon faith in the soul , which is indeed the life and soul of prayer. Faith can pray without words ; but the most elegant words , the phrase of Angels is not worthy to be called

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prayer

prayer without faith. I speak not so much of faith inditing a prayer, or giving life to it, as of its being virtually prayer, if not something more; for indeed faith is a real bringing down of that God, and sucking in of those influences into the soul, which prayer only looks up for.

Communion with God is a continual *fast*, it is that spiritual and most excellent way of fasting, whereby the soul *emptying* it self of it self and all self-fulness, self-sufficiency, self-confidence, receives of the fulness of God alone, and is filled therewith. A soul communing rightly with God, is a soul emptied of, and as it were *fasting* from it self; which is the most excellent way of fasting.

It is a continual *thanksgiving*; and indeed the best way of thanksgiving in the world. To render up our selves to God purely and entirely, to reflect the glory of God in an holy and godlike temper, is a real and living *thank-offering*. This is that *Hallelujah*, so much spoke of, which the  
Angels

Angels and Saints in glory do sing perpetually : what other adjunct of it there may be, I will not here dispute.

This communion of hearts and wills is a constant and most excellent *celebration of Sacraments*. The Soul that is really *Baptised* into the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, and *seeds* upon God, and is one with him, keeps a continual *Sacrament* ; without which, the Sacramental *eating* and *drinking* is but a jejune and dry devotion. In a word, it is not possible for any thing that is extrinsecal to the soul to make it happy, but the soul that is advanced into the noble state of communion with God, is made partaker of a new nature, and is truly happy.

Nay further I will add, that this communion with God is not only better than all duties and ordinances, but even better than all *revelations*, *evidences*, *discoveries* that can be made or given to the soul *ab extra*, all that are from without, a manifestation of God, *i. e.* of a divine life in the soul, is much better than such a manifesta-

tion as *Moses* had of his glory in the cleft of the Rock, *Exod. 34.* Many think, oh if they might but be assured of the love of God, of the pardon of sin, of an interest in Christ, they should be happy: why I will tell you, if you had a voice from Heaven, saying that ye were the beloved Children of God, as Christ had; an Angel sent from God to tell you that ye were beloved and highly favoured of God, as his Mother *Mary* had, yet were communion with God to be preferred before these: For these things could not make a soul happy without real communion with God, but communion with God can and doth make a soul happy without these: And to this purpose I suppose I may apply that famous speech of our Saviour's by way of allusion, *It is more blessed to give, than to receive*, to give up ones self, ones heart, will, interests and affections to God, than to receive any external discoveries and manifestations from him. Why do we so earnestly seek after signs from  
without



without us of Gods presence with us; as if there were any thing better or more desirable to the soul than *Emanuel*, God with us, or as the Apostle speaks, Christ in us the hope of glory? He that desires any other evidence of grace, but more grace, do's not only light up a candle to see the Sun by, but indeed he acts like one that thinks there is something better than God himself; though I do not say that all do think so who are covetous of such manifestations. But this I will say, and you may do well to chew upon it, that holy longings after a true and spiritual communion with God do certainly spring from a divine principle in the soul; whereas a thirst after *assurance* of Gods love, and reconciliation of our persons with him, may be only the fruit of self-love and interest. — *Let me dye the death of the Righteous:* you know whose wish it was.

7. *Though communion with God do concern the whole soul, and all the faculties, affections, and motions of it,*

( it is Gods spreading his influences and exercising his sovereignty over all the powers of the soul, and their mutual spending of themselves upon him and conforming to him, ) yet the great *Acts* of the soul whereby it chiefly holds communion with God are loving and Believing. Love is the joyning and knitting of the soul to God; Faith is the souls labouring after more intimate conjunction with him, sucking in influences from him, and participations of him into the Soul. We may say that faith *fetches* in supplies from Heaven, and Love *enjoyes* them; faith *sucks* in sweetness and vertue from Christ, and love *feeds* upon it. Certainly these two eminent graces grow, and live, and thrive together, and are inseparable companions. It is somewhat difficult to distinguish them, or to assign to each his proper place and work in the soul; they seem mutually to *act*, and to be mutually *acted* by each other; perhaps the Apostle might have respect to this myserie, when he speaks so doubtfully,

doubtfully, Gal. 5. 6. *πιστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη*, which words may be translated, either Faith *acting* by love, or faith *acted* by love. We know indeed that in the state of perfect communion ( which we call glory ) love shall abide and flourish more abundantly, and there shall be no room for faith there, not as to the principal act of it; but whether hath the greater part in maintaining our communion with God in this world, is not easie, nor indeed needfull to determine. The godly soul is the most proper Temple wherein God dwelleth, according to that, 2 Cor. 6. 16. *Ye are the Temple of the living God*; Faith and Love are the *Jachin* and *Boaz*, the two great Pillars which keep up the Soul as a Temple, take away these, and it remains a soul indeed, but the soul do's not remain a Temple to the Lord. In a word, these two are the souls principal handmaids which she useth about this blessed guest; Faith goes out and brings him in, and Love entertains him; by faith she finds him,

him, whom she seeks ; and by love she kisses him whom she finds , as the spouse is described, *Cant.* 8. 1.

8. *The communion that is between God, and the godly Soul is altogether different from that communion that is between creatures.* Here I might shew you how it exceeds and excells that, in many respects ; but I shall not insist upon any of those particulars, nor indeed upon any of those many differences that are between them, save only upon this one : The communion that is between creature and creature is perfect in its kind, and so consequently gives mutual satisfaction ; I mean it terminates the expectations, so that nothing remains to be enjoyed in them more than what is enjoyed. The creature is shallow and soon fathomed, we soon come to the bottom of it : A finite can grasp a finite Being and enjoy it, as I may say, all at once. A man may come so near to his friend that he can come no nearer, enjoy him as fully as he is capable to enjoy, or the other, to be enjoyed.

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Created sweetness may be exhausted to the very bottom. But the souls communion with God do's not give it any such satisfaction, though indeed, in some sense, it gives a satisfaction of a much higher and more excellent kind. I told you before that the souls communion with God is imperfect in this life, and therefore it must needs follow that it cannot satisfy; that is, not terminate and fill up the desires of it. Communion with God is maintained by *faith* and *love* as you have heard, which proves it to be very sweet; but it also admits of *Hope*, which proves it to be not satisfactory: For where there is yet any place left for hope, there is no full or satisfactory enjoyment. This may serve as a certain note whereby to judge of the truth of that communion with God; it is not *glorifying* to the soul, but will certainly manifest it self in incessant hungriings *interopes inops*, the soul is in the midst of plenty, and yet cries out as if it were ready to starve for want. When

I consider the temper of some *perfectionists*, who cry down duties and ordinances as low and unprofitable rudiments, and boast of their full and inaccessionable attainments, and compare it with the temper of the great Apostle, who did not reckon that he had attained, but still followed after that he might apprehend, who forgot the things that were behind, and reached forth unto those things that were before, pressing towards the mark, &c. *Phil. 3. 12, 13, 14.* I am ready to cry out, *Aut hic non est Apostolus, aut hi non sunt Apostolici.* But an Apostle he was, and had very intimate communion with his Lord, and therefore I confess I cannot allow these men so high a place in my opinion as they have in their own. God is infinite, and therefore though the soul may be ever grasping, yet it can never comprehend, and yet the soul finds him to be infinitely good, and so cannot cease grasping at him neither. The godly soul sees that there is yet much more to be enjoyed of God,  
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and in him; and therefore though it be very near to him, yet cries out and complains of its distance from him, — Oh when shall I come and appear before him! though it be united to him, yet it longs to be yet more one with him still, to be in a closer conjunction. The godly soul forgets with *Paul* what it hath received, not through disingenuity and unthankfulness, but through a holy ardour and covetousness: All that he hath of God seems little, because there is yet so much to be had. Though the godly soul do drink of the fountain, yet that is not enough, it would lye down by it; though it do lye down by it, yet so it is not satisfied neither, except it may bathe it self, and even be swallowed up therein. Behold a Paradox, the godly soul is most thirsty, though according to Christs promise, it thirst no more: it is most restless, though according to his promise it have rest. It is proper to God alone to rest in his love, for the creature cannot in this imperfect state: by this we know that



that we are not yet in Heaven, for it is a state of perfect rest, not sloth or cessation, but *satisfaction*. Faith is the Feavour of the soul, rendring it more thirsty by how much the more it drinks in of the Water of Life, the living streams that flow forth from the Throne of God and of the Lamb. As the Waters of the Sanctuary are described by the Prophet growing deeper and deeper, *Ezek. 47.* so *hope* which is the souls appetite grows larger and larger, and cannot be satisfied till the souls capacity be filled up.

The Doctrinal part being thus briefly dispatcht, it will be easie to inferr some things by way of corolary. I shall content my self with three only amongst many.

I. *All wicked men are strangers to God.* We know indeed that God according to his infinite essence is present with all his creatures: not only men but even devils too have their being in him, he hath spread his omnipotence as the foundation where-  
upon

upon the whole Creation doth stand ; he reared up the world in himself, and in him it doth subsist at this day. However Angels and men have sadly fallen from God , yet they may be truly said to live in him still ; and although all wicked souls do straggle off from God as to their *dispositions* and *affections* , ingrafting themselves into another stock by sin and wickedness, yet they cannot possibly straggle from him as to their *subsistence* , as the Apostle teaches the Athenian Philosophers, Act. 17. 27. *He is not far from every one of us* , though few feel after him or find him. And it may be truly said in some sense, that all the Creatures, yea the very worst of them, have a communion with God ; all partake of him, no creature hath any thing of its own really distinct from him. Every thing that hath a *Being* , hath a relation to that infinite and supreme *Being* , and every *living* thing may be rightly said to have communion with him who is *life* it self. And all those several excellencies that are in

in the Creatures, are effluxes from God, who hath derived various prints of his own beauty and perfection upon every thing that he hath made. Gods making of a thing is no other than the communicating of himself thereunto. And therefore when you look into the world, do not view any creature in the narrow point of its own Being, but in the unbounded essence of God, and therein love and admire it. But upon the immortal soul of man, God hath copyed out his Divine perfections more clearly and gloriously than upon any other Creature in this world. God could not make a rational soul without communicating of his own infinite wisdom, power, life, freedom unto it: so that there is more of the Divine nature to be seen in the *understanding* and *will* of any one man, than in the whole fabrick of Heaven and Earth.

Notwithstanding this, wicked men are strangers to God. They live and move in God indeed, but they know  
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it not, they consider it not; they act  
 as if they had no *dependance* upon him,  
 no *relation* to him. Though they  
 have some kind of communion with  
 God as Creatures, yet this makes  
 them not at all happy; for they are  
 departed from God in their affections  
 and dispositions, they have degene-  
 rated from that subserviency and sub-  
 ordination to the Divine Will which  
 is the proper perfection of the crea-  
 ture, and are *alienated from the life*  
*of God*, as the Apostle speaks, *Eph.*  
*4. 18.* It is not the souls moving *in*  
 God that makes it truly and happily  
 nigh unto him, but its moving *to-*  
*wards* God as the chief object, and *ac-*  
*cording to the will* of God, as the chief-  
 est rule, and therefore wicked men  
 who pitch upon other objects, and  
 walk by other laws, even the lusts and  
 ordinances of their own flesh and  
 fancy, are properly strangers to God  
 and miserable. He is not properly  
 said to know God, who hath a notion  
 of him formed in his head, but he  
 whose heart and will is molded into a  
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conformity to God, and a delight in him ; so that a wicked man, though he *know* and *believe* and *tremble* as much as any of the Devils, yet not loving nor delighting in God as his chiefest good, not being conformed to his Image, as the highest and purest perfection, and may be truly said to be estranged from him ; which is a state of hell and death and darkness. This is the man who though not in words, yet interpretatively and really saith unto God, Depart from me, I desire not the knowledge of thy wayes, with them in *Job* 21. 14. These do really exempt themselves from the dominion of Christ, and do *really*, though not *audibly*, say with them in the Gospel, *Luk.* 19. 14. *We will not have this man to reign over us.* However men pretend to, and boast of their relation to, and acquaintance with God, certainly all that live a meer sensual life, *non-conformists* to the image of God, are truly said to be strangers to him, and in a state of *non-communion* with him. 1 *Job.* 1. 6. 2 *Cor.* 6. 14.

2. The

2 *The life of a true Christian is the most high and noble life in the world; it exceeds the life of all other men, even of the greatest of men. The character that is here given of the godly man is the highest that can be given of any man, or indeed of any creature. It is the highest glory and excellency of the creature to partake of the life of God, of the perfections of the Creator; and such is the description that the Spirit of God here makes of the godly man. What an unreasonable and senseless reproach is that which this wicked world doth cast upon Religion, calling it a low and despicable thing, and upon Religious and godly men, calling them low spirited, puny people. Can a man be better spirited, than with the spirit of God? Can any thing more truly ennoble a soul than a divine nature? Can a man be raised any higher than unto Heaven it self? So noble is the godly soul, Prov. 15. 24. The way of life is above to the wise; And consequently all wicked men lead a low life,*

life, and are bound under chains of death and darkness : The righteous man is of a high and divine original, born of God, born from above, and therefore is more excellent than his neighbour, than any of his neighbours, even a King himself being judge, *Prov. 12. 26.* What a hellish baseness is that sinful gallantry of spirit, what a brutishness is that sensuality of living, which the degenerate Sons of *Adam* do so much magnifie ! True goodness and excellency of spirit must be measured by the proportion that it bears to the supreme good, the infinite pattern of all perfection. What excellent persons were those renowned Saints of old, of whom the Apostle sayes, that *the world was not worthy*, *Heb. 11. 38.* however they were thought *not worthy to live in the world.* What a noble and generous spirit of true Christian valour, patience, meekness, contempt of the world and self-denial was that, which was to be seen in the blessed Apostles, however they were



were esteemed as the filth and sweepings of the world, the *off-scouring of all things*? To which of the noble, wise, mighty men of the world, *as such*, did God ever say, these are the men that have fellowship with me, these are the men that lead a noble and divine life? No, no, *not many noble are called*; and when they are called, they are made more noble, than ever they were by birth or descent, by places of preferment or command. The life of every wicked man, of what rank or size soever he be in the world, is but a low life, a life in most things common to the very beasts with him; If the main of his business and delight be to eat, and drink, and work, and sleep, and enjoy sensual pleasures, what doth he? what enjoyeth he more than *the beasts that perish*? But the life of the meanest soul that hath true and spiritual communion with God, is a life common to him with the blessed Angels, those *sons of the morning*, the flower of the whole Creation.

**Creation.** That life which hath *self* for its *centre*, must needs be a penurious and indeed a painfull life: For how can the soul of man possibly feed to the full upon such spare diet, such scant fare as it finds at home? Nay indeed how can it choose but be in pain and torture; whilst it stretcheth it self upon a *self-sufficiency*, or *creature-fulness* which is not at all commensurate to it? But the soul that rightly stretches and spends all its faculties upon the infinite and blessed God, finds all its capacities filled up to the brim with that fountain of goodness, and it self perfectly matcht with a suitable and satisfactory object. This is the true and only nobleness of spirit, when all the powers and faculties of this immortal soul are exalted and advanced into a true and vital sympathy and communion with the chiefest good, formed according to his will, conformed to his image.

And oh that wisdom might be more *justified of her children*! Oh that the life of God did but clearly manifest

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nifest it self and shine forth in the lives of them that call themselves *godly* ! Alas that ever God himself should suffer reproach by reason of the low-spiritedness and laziness of his servants ! For this cause is Religion evil spoken of ; The Lord awaken and ennoble us to express and shew forth the divine life with all power and vigour, to live as high as the calling wherewith we are called, and so roll away this reproach !

3. *The life of a Christian is not a heavy sluggish thing, but active and vigorous*, as the phrase communion with God imports. Religion is a communication of life and vigour from him who is life it self ; which makes the truly godlike soul to be quick and powerfull in its motions. Every thing is by so much the swifter and stronger in its motions, by how much the nearer it is to its centre, as Philosophy tells us. Certainly by how much the nearer any man is gotten to God who is the centre of souls, by so much the more do's he

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covet after more intimate communion with him, and the more eagerly lay hold upon him. Communion do's necessarily imply *reaction* or *reflection*: the soul that receives of God and his fulness, will certainly be *emptying* it self into him again. Communion in the very force of the phrase implies a *mutualness*; we cannot suppose a soul partaking of God, but it must needs mutually render up it self to him again. There can be no commerce nor correspondence without *returns*: but what return can the godly soul make unto God, why it renders up its whole self unto him? Faith is a *giving* grace as well as a *receiving*, it gives up the soul back to Christ, as well as take Christ into the soul; it sucks in strength and grace from God, and reciprocally spends the same and the whole powers of the soul upon him. The happiness of a godly soul doth not consist in *cessation* and rest; the soul it self being a powerful and *Active Being*, the happiness of it, the very rest

rest of it must also be active and vigorous. Where there is communion, there must needs be quick and lively returns, reciprocations, reflections, and correspondencies, the *drawings* of God are answered with the souls *running*, Cant. 1. 4. The motion of Christs fingers begets a motion in the Christians soul, Cant. 5. 4. *My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.* These are the divine and harmonious responses which are made and maintained in the godly soul, the *Temple* of the living God. O shake off that lazy and drowlie spirit, which hath so benumbed many in this cold and stupid age of the world, work out your Salvation with all care and diligence! If your Religion be nothing but a spiritual kind of *sleep*, your Heaven will prove to be nothing but a pleasant kind of *dream*.

Communion with God speaks something divine, active, vigorous. The life of a Christian doth not consist only in cessation from evil, reformation

mation of sin, or dying thereunto; *Mortification* is but one part of *Regeneration*. It is the conceit, and I doubt the deceit of many nominal Christians, that if they can but keep up an indifferent even spirit and conversation free from gross and scandalous sins from day to day, they are happy enough, their utmost ambition is to be innocent and harmless. This indeed is necessary and praise worthy; but surely the happiness of a soul lyes higher: Thus happy are all the creatures that keep in the station, and keep up the order prescribed them of God: Thus happy is the Sun in the Firmament running his race continually, and never departing from the office which is assigned to it. But the soul of man is capable of a higher kind of happiness, viz. *communion with God*; which is, when the faculties thereof being awakened, refined and acted by the spirit of God, do reciprocally act and spend themselves upon him, longing to be perfectly swallowed

lowed up in him, and to be all that which God himself is, as far as the Creature is capable to drink in the perfections of the Creator, and become one with his Maker. This is that truly noble and divine life, which is here called communion with God, which the high-spirited and generous soul labours yet more and more to be growing up into, and perfected in. Keep your selves with *David* from your iniquities; it is something to be freed from the guilt and power of sin; but there is somewhat higher than this, a more excellent attainment, a more divine accomplishment, go on therefore with the same *David*, and aspire after this pure and blissful state, this Heaven upon earth, waiting for the more ample and glorious manifestations of God to you, and in you, more than they that watch for the morning, as he did, *Psal.* 130. 6. This inference was only of *instruction*, but the sweetness and needfulness of the subject almost prevails with me to turn it



into an earnest *exhortation*, but that I would not prevent my self. Therefore I proceed to the next way of improving this doctrine, which shall be by way of conviction or Reprehension.

1. Our fellowship *is*, It reproves them that can take up with a *shall be*, a Heaven to come. I am now speaking, not to the worst of men, whose very souls are swallowed up in sensual enjoyments, and imprisoned in their senses: For these men either think of no Heaven at all, or else they place their Heaven and happiness, in the enjoyment of themselves or of the creature. Nor yet do I speak to those men who being persuaded of a future state, do indeed wish for a Heaven to come, but then it is a poor kind of low and earthly Heaven consisting in *ease, rest, safety, freedom from troubles or torments*; which is the best happiness which most men understand, the highest Heaven that any carnal mind can see or soar up to. But I am speaking to a better and finer sort of souls than these, that

that are verily possess with a sense of a pure and spiritual Heaven in the world to come; yea they are so overpowered with the foresight of it, as that they do earnestly expect and wish for it; yea the hopes of it do sustain and strengthen their hearts under the manifold temptations and persecutions of this present world; they are so verily perswaded of the truth of it, and of their own title to it too, that they are content to abide this long and disconsolate night of *dimness* and *anguish* and *frightfulness*, meekly in expectation of the dawning of that *day*, that clear and bright day of their glorious and everlasting *Redemption*. And herein I am far from blaming them, nay I must needs commend their magnanimous faith, and self-denial. But in the meantime they dwell too much upon Heaven as a future state, and comfort themselves only in a happiness to come, not longing and labouring to find a Heaven opened within themselves, a beginning of eternal bliss

brought into themselves ; they are too well content with a certain *reversion* , and do not eagerly enough endeavour a *present possession* , to be actually enstated in so much of the *inheritance* of souls as may fall to their share even in this lower world ; This slothful temper and inactivity I do condemn wherever it is found ; yea though it be in my own soul. Every thing in the world by a natural principle thirsts after its proper rest , and a happiness suitable to the nature of it ; no creature can be content ( though it may be *constrained* ) to be at a distance from its centre, but is still carryed out towards its own perfection. And why then should a godly soul , who is Gods only *new creature* in the world be content with a *state of imperfections* ? why should not he as eagerly covet , and as earnestly pursue the most intimate and close communion and conjunction with his God , as they do with their respective centers ? Can any earthly sensual man be content with

with an inheritance in reversion, so as to suspend his minding and following of the world till hereafter? Can any ambitious spirit, who places his main happiness and contentment in popular estimation and worldly greatness, be content to stand gazing at preferments; will he be willing to sit still and wait till they drop into his mouth? No, no, there is a raging thirst in the soul which will not suffer it to be at rest, but is still awakening and provoking all the powers of the whole man, till they arise and fetch in water to quench it. And therefore we read of men making haste to be rich, *Prov.* 28. 22. and hastning after another God, *Psal.* 16. 4. which eager and ardent passions towards earthly objects, you may see lively described in the instances of *Ahab*, *Amnon* and *Haman* in the holy story. And is there any reason to be given, but why that new nature and divine principle, which God putteth into regenerate souls, should carry them as hastily and forcibly to

a present fruition of their proper object and happiness, (so far as at present it may be enjoyed,) as that corrupt and degenerate nature doth hurry on them, in whom it ruleth, towards the satisfaction of their beastly lusts? Divines speak sometimes of making Heaven and eternal life present to our selves, and say that this is the work of faith; which is an high and excellent doctrine, but I doubt, not thoroughly understood by ordinary Christians. To make Heaven present to ones self, is not only to insist upon a state of future happiness in frequent meditations, to think much of it, neither is this that noble employment of saving faith: But the life and power of faith is most eminently exerted in sucking in participations of life and grace from Christ, and in a real bringing down of God and Heaven into the Soul. The truth is Heaven is a state of perfect communion with God, a state of love, joy, peace, purity, freedom, and as far as  
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any soul is in such a state upon earth, so far he is above the earth, and may be said to be in Heaven. Therefore a right active soul, that truly understands his proper and spiritual Heaven and happiness; so far as he is thus active and sensible, cannot be content to stay for all his happiness till the world to come, cannot be content to be unhappy, no not for an hour, but is still growing up in God, and springing up into everlasting life, *John 4. 14.*

2. It reprehends them that make a stir about the Kingdom of Christ in the world, and mens being brought in to the communion of the Church, but advance not his Kingdom in their own souls, nor long not to have their own souls advanced into that noble state of communion with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. There is doubtless a generation of such popular Christians, who being strangers to the life, and power, and spirit of true Religion, do endeavour to put of themselves to the world, and commend themselves to the charity of their brethren by

by a pretended zeal for the Kingdom of Christ in the world, and *the glorious manifestation* of it, as they speak. I know indeed that it is worthy the cares and prayers and utmost diligence of every serious Christian, to spread and propagate the knowledge of the Gospel, to pour out the ointment of Christs name far and near : A more pure and spiritual administration of all Gospel ordinances throughout the world is highly desirable ; yea and I think an indifferent and careless disposition towards the worship of God argues much of an earthly and atheistical mind. But I fear that *Kingdom of Christ*, and those *glorious manifestations* and *discoveries* which are so much pretended to by many, if they should be thoroughly examined, would be at length resolved into nothing else but the *advancement of some one party or interest above all the rest*, or the exchanging of an old *form and dress* of Religion for a new one ; and that this *zeal* would be found little better than the *blazings* of self-love, a fire kindled



led not by a *coal from the Altar*, but by a *spark* of their own. But be it so, that this disposition of theirs is sincere and spiritual; should not this *charity* begin at home? The most proper *Kingdom of Christ* is that whereby he ruleth in the hearts of men; the most excellent *Worship* is when the soul it self becomes a *temple* for the living God to dwell in, and to receive and reflect the manifestations of his glory, when a *fire* of Divine love is kindled in it, and therein it doth offer up, not *bulls* and *goats*, nor so much *prayers* and *meditations*, as indeed it self unto God, which is a *reasonable service* as the Apostle speaks, far more glorious than the *Mosaicall*, or *Evangelical* dispensation either, if you consider it in the letter only. What ever men may pretend, no man can be truly and rightly studious of the advancement of the *Kingdom of God* in the world, that hath not first felt the mighty power and blessed effects of it in his own soul. Communion with the Church is only so far to be valued

valued, as it lyes in order to a real and spiritual communion with God; which communion with God, if we do indeed sincerely wish to others, we shall more abundantly labour to promote in our selves. I cannot believe that he doth heartily seek the happiness of others, who himself sits still and is content to be miserable, especially when their happiness and his is one and the same.

3. It condemns them for no Christians, whose *fellowship* is only with their *fellow creatures*. We have seen that this is the character, the distinguishing character of a godly man, to have fellowship with God; it must needs follow then, that those degenerate souls that rise no higher than the world, that converse only with self or any other creature, are verily strangers to true Christianity, whatever their confidence or presumption may be. Christians, tell not me what you profess of Christ, what you believe of the Gospel, what orthodox opinions you hold, what an honest

honest party you side with, how many and specious duties you perform, no nor what hopes or wishes you have of going to Heaven; But tell me where is your principal communion; what do you mainly mind, follow, converse with; what pattern do you conform to; what rule do you live by; what object do you ultimately aim at? The whole world of worldly men doth hasten after another God, as the Psalmists Phrase is, though not all after the same God; they spend their souls indeed upon various objects, and use different methods to obtain rest, but yet all their happiness and contentment is ultimately resolved into creature-communion. That dreadful sentence, that the Apostle delivers universally concerning all men, is to be limited to all wicked men only, and of them it is undoubtedly true, Phil. 2. 21. *All seek their own, and none the things of Jesus Christ.* And of All these it is that the Psalmists Many is to be understood, Psal. 4. 6. *There be many that say who will shew us any good,*

good, i. e. any creature-good, as the words following do explain it. All unregenerate souls are bound up in the creature, some creature or other; and therefore the noblest of them, whatever brags they may make, is low and ignoble; their main converse is but with their fellow-creatures, and indeed creatures much inferiour to themselves, *corn and wine* sayes the Psalmist, *earthly things* sayes the Apostle, Phil. 3. 19. *Who mind earthly things*. In a word, though it be true what the Apostle sayes in one place, that all men in the world do live in God *Act. 17. 28.* yet it is also true, that most men, as the same Apostle speaks elsewhere, do live *without God in the world*, have their hearts flaked down to one creature or other, and so fall short of this honourable character which the Apostle here gives of godly men, ——— *our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

And now I shall wrap up the remainder of this Discourse in an humble

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ble request and earnest exhortation.

*Reckon not upon any happiness below this communion.* There are many things which a Christian may take to be *comforts*, but only one, this one, that he ought to take to be the *Happiness* of his life. I design not to speak any thing to the prejudice of *natural* or *civil* ornaments or accomplishments, much less to the disparagement of any of those *endowments* or *employments* which are in a *sense spiritual*, commonly called *gifts* and *duties*: But I must confess it is one of the great wonders of the world to me; to see such a noble and intelligent Being as the soul of man is, attending to, and pursuing after things either *extrinsecal* or *inferiour* to it self, in the mean time carelessly forgetting, or wilfully rejecting its main *happiness*, principal *end*, and proper *perfection*. As for those sensual persons, those meer *Animals*, whose souls are *incarnate* in their senses, and seem to perform no higher office in the world than the souls  
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of beasts, that is to carry about their bodies, who value themselves by their *bodies*, or which is baser by the *apparel* that cloaths them, or the *estates* that feed them. I shall not now trouble my self about them, but leave them to be chastised by *Seneca* or *Plutarch*, or indeed any ordinary Philosopher. I shall rather apply my self a little, to a sort of higher spirited people, whom by a condescension of charity we call *Christians*, who valuing themselves by external *professions*, *priviledges*, *performances*, may indeed be said to be somewhat more *scrupulous* and *curious*, but no less *mistaken* than the former: for if the grosser sort of *sensicalists* do deny and professedly *abjure* their own reasons, and the finer sort of *hypocrites* do more cunningly *bribe* theirs, each method amounts to no more than a cheat, and both parties will be alike miserable, save that the latter will be somewhat more tormented in missing of a happiness which he look'd and hop'd

hop'd for. It is not proper to my present discourse to speak so highly and honourably of these externals of Christianity ; nor to press unto them so zealously as I do at all times when I have occasion ; for I do verily value all ordinances of Christ, and duties of Gods worship at a high rate ; nay I know not any serious and truly godly soul in the world, but it is of this same profession with me : But I must confess I think it is one of the greatest and most pernicious cheats in the world, for men to feed upon the *dish* instead of the *meat*, to place their happiness in those things which God hath only appointed to be *means* to convey it. This was the great destruction of the Jewish Church, by this they perished ; Thus they are every where described in Scripture, as a people resting in their priviledges and performances, boasting of their *Sacrifices* and *Temple-service* ; they made account of a strange kind of flesh-pleasing Heaven, something *distinct* from



from them , and reserved for them ;  
to be given them by way of reward for  
the righteousness which *themselves*  
had wrought by the power of their  
own free-will ( which freewill they  
say is an effect of mans fall , but they  
make it a cause of mans rise , for  
now he can purchase and merit a  
happiness , which happiness is also  
more illustrious than that given of  
meer grace ; ) which righteousness  
( if we look either into their own  
writings , or Gods writings concern-  
ing them ) we shall find was nothing  
else ; but a strict observance of the  
precepts of the law , according to  
the letter and external dispensation  
of it. Such a low and legal spi-  
rit was generally found amongst the  
Jews ; I wish the greatest part of  
us who are in profession and name  
evangelical be not found as truly  
legal in spirit and temper as they  
were. If we cry the Gospel of Christ ,  
the Gospel of Christ , with the same  
spirit as they cryed the Temple of  
the Lord , the Temple of the Lord , our  
confidence

confidence will as surely betray us into a final misery as theirs did. True indeed *Prayers, Sacraments, Sermons* are somewhat finer words than the old obsolete ones the *Law, Sacrifices, Ceremonies*; but alas they are but *words*; at least they are not Gods, no more fit to terminate our devotions and affections than these. I beseech you therefore Christians, be not mistaken in this matter. True Christianity is not a *notion*, but a *nature*; that is not *Religion* which is lapt up in Books, or laid up in mens brains, but it is laid in the very constitution of the soul, a new principle implanted by God in the highest powers of the soul, refining and spiritualizing all the faculties thereof, and rendring them as like to God himself, as such a creature can resemble its Creator. It is a truth as clear as the Sun is clear, that nothing can make a Soul truly happy, but what is wrought into the nature of it, and that must be somewhat more excellent than it self, and that  
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can be nothing less than something *divine*, even the *image* of the blessed God. If you be Christians in deed and in truth, value all the ordinances of God and the duties of Christian Religion, but value not your selves by these, your happiness by these: Attend upon them all for the maintaining and encreasing of *real* fellowship with God: for though these be not it, yet they are the way wherein it pleases God to give it: drink the *sincere* milk of the Word, but let it be only with a holy design of *growing* thereby, of *growing* up into God, and a divine life. Away with those low and base thoughts of happiness; the happiness of a soul is a high and excellent, indeed a divine thing, it is in some sense common to God and the soul; God is happy in himself alone, and the soul can only be happy in him. What contentment, what real happiness, Christian, can the rising of thy party in the world, or the rising of thy name in the countrey bring thee,

thee, if in the mean time, thou thy  
 self harbourest any *carnal will*, *self-in-*  
~~terest~~ *terest* that doth rise up in opposition  
 to the pure and perfect will and na-  
 ture of God? how art thou happy  
 in thy prayers, if thou cast sin out at  
 thy *mouth*, and in the mean time a  
 fountain of iniquity be springing up in  
 thy *heart*? What avails it towards a  
 state of perfection, to be of the most  
 orthodox *opinions*, the honestest *society*,  
 the fairest *profession*, the most popular  
 and sanctimonious *form*, or the most  
 plausible *performances* either, the soul  
 being in the mean time alienated from  
 the life of God, and feeding upon  
 some earthly trash or other, which  
 destroys the native powers and vi-  
 gour of it, and keeps it under a per-  
 petual languor? even just so much as  
 a *silken stocken* upon a gouty leg, or a  
*Princely Diadem* upon an *aching head*.

avails towards a state of ease and  
 soundness and eucrasie of body. Let  
 nothing limit your ambition, but a  
 state of god-like *perfection*, let nothing  
 set bounds to your loving and longing  
 soul.

but a real fruition of God him-  
self: may let not that bound them  
anther, but the more you enjoy, see,  
and taste, the more let your love be  
strengthened, after the manner of fire,  
which the more it is fed, the more  
hungry and devouring it grows. In a  
word, let nothing satisfy you lower  
than the highest character that can be  
given of mortal man, to be men after  
Gods own heart, to have God dwelling  
in you, to be filled with his fulness, to  
have this real and excellent Communion  
with the Father, and with his Son Jesus  
Christ, To whom be all honour praise  
and glory, for ever and ever!

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